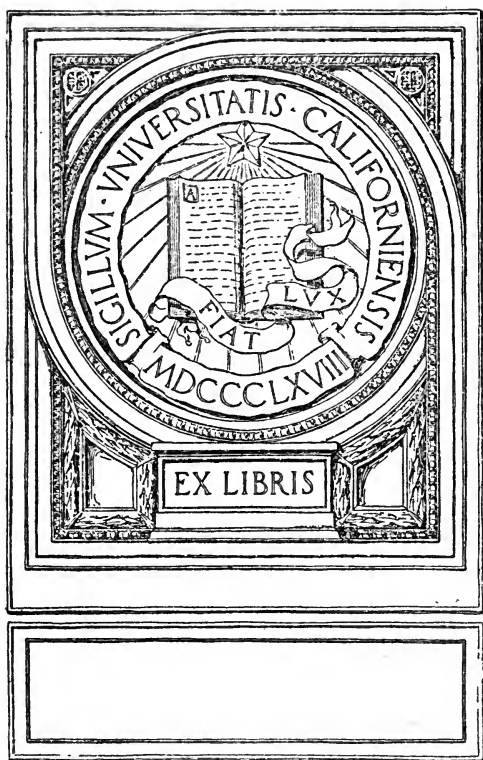
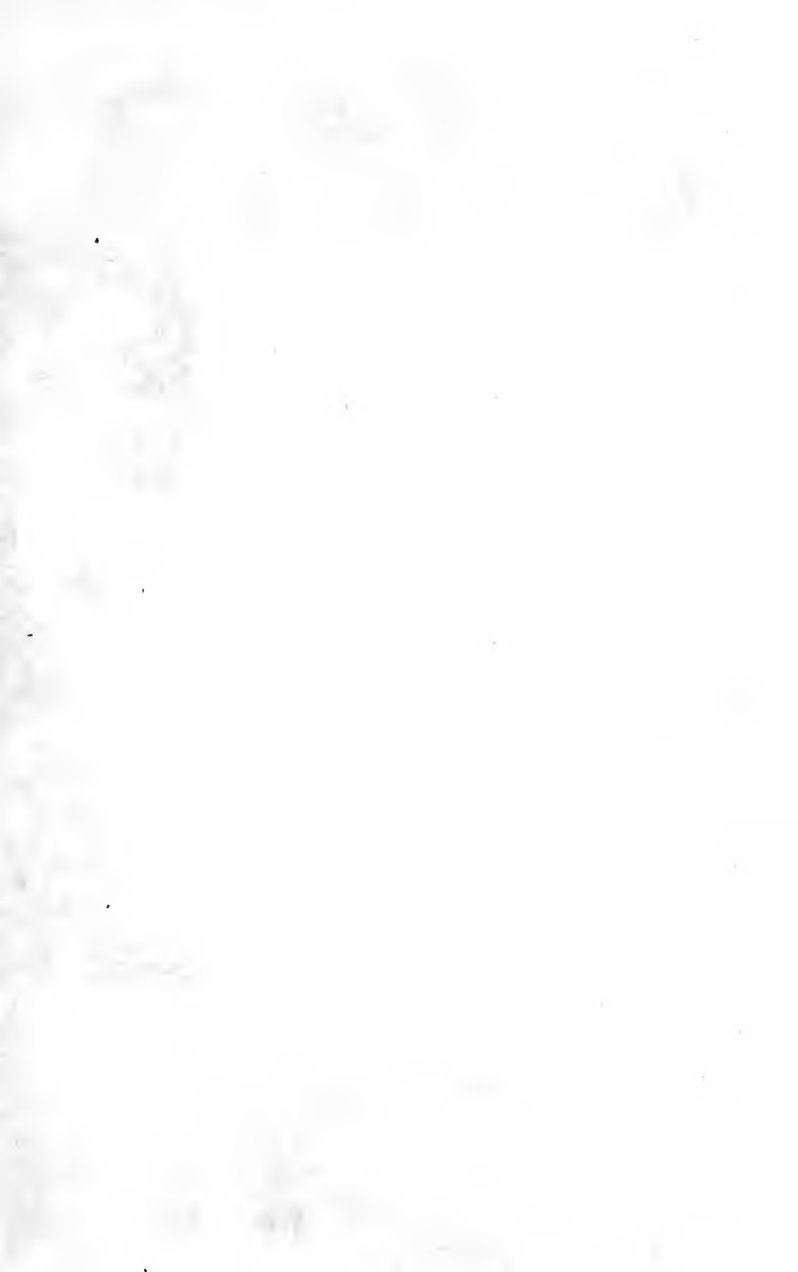


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ALL IS ONE

By the same Author

WHAT IS POETRY ?

WALT WHITMAN. A STUDY AND A SELECTION

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY ?

THE CREED OF CHRIST

THE CREED OF BUDDHA

WHAT IS AND WHAT MIGHT BE

THE TRAGEDY OF EDUCATION

IN DEFENCE OF WHAT MIGHT BE

THE NEMESIS OF DOCILITY

THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL

THE SECRET OF THE CROSS

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

IN QUEST OF AN IDEAL

GIVE ME THE YOUNG

ALL IS ONE

A PLEA FOR THE HIGHER
PANTHEISM

BY

EDMOND HOLMES



LONDON

RICHARD COBDEN-SANDERSON

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ANNALS

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CHAPTER I

A TRANSCENDENTAL EXPERIENCE

I RECENTLY underwent a severe surgical operation, which was followed by a sojourn of five weeks in a nursing home. Recovery from that particular operation is always tedious and unpleasant; and I was duly warned that my experiences in the home would be more or less purgatorial. It is true that I suffered much from pain, discomfort and sleeplessness. Yet, as I look back to those five weeks, they seem to have been nearly all bright sunshine. I must have been singularly fortunate in my choice, or rather in the choice that was made for me, of a nursing home. For the two "sisters" to whose care I was committed seemed to have infected all the nurses with their own spirit of cheerfulness, unselfishness and loving kindness. Not once, during the whole of my sojourn, did I see a frown on any face, or hear an unkind or even an impatient word.

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After I had spent three weeks in that sunlit atmosphere I passed into a state of—I know not how to describe it, but I will speak of it, for want of a fitter phrase, as—spiritual exaltation. While I was in that state I had experiences which may perhaps be described, again for want of a fitter word, as transcendental. What was the cause, or what were the causes of those experiences, I cannot say. The atmosphere of the house was, I am very sure, one cause. But there may have been others. Excessive loss of blood may have counted for something. My brain was undoubtedly under-nourished; and the consequent diminution of my intellectual activities may have been partly responsible for the super-excitation of the emotional side of my being. A medical expert might have been able to suggest other physical causes, obscure, subtle, and difficult even for him to diagnose.

But as to the vividness and convincingness of the experiences, whatever their causes may have been, there could be no doubt. I came nearer then—such was and still is my conviction—than I had ever done before, to seeing things as they really are. My sense of proportion, a sense which I had somehow lost, or at least seriously impaired, seemed to have been completely restored. My standard of values, which had been perverted by various adverse influences, seemed to have been suddenly and authoritatively

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rectified. I knew what were the real things of life, the things that make life worth living; and my contempt for the things which men usually strive for—material possessions, comforts, luxuries, success, advancement, distinction, position, and the like—was unbounded.

Such experiences are very rare, but perhaps less rare than sense-bound and brain-bound minds might imagine. Sir Francis Young-husband, in his book "India and Tibet," describes a similar experience, which seems, while it lasted—its duration was brief—to have been even more vivid than mine. His words are worth quoting, both for their own sake, and because they may help my readers to realise what transcendental emotion means: "When I reached camp* I went off alone to the mountain side, and gave myself up to all the emotions of this eventful time. My task was over, and every anxiety was passed. The scenery was in sympathy with my feelings; the unclouded sky a heavenly blue; the mountains softly merging into violet; and as I now looked towards that mysterious purple haze in which the sacred city was once more wrapped, I no longer had cause to dread the hatred it might hide. From it

* Sir Francis had brought his mission to Lhasa to a happy end and had signed a treaty of peace and amity with the Tibetans. The time had come for him to leave Lhasa and return to India.

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came only the echo of the Lama's words of peace. And with all the warmth still on me of that impressive farewell message and bathed in the insinuating influences of that dreamy autumn evening, I was insensibly suffused with an almost intoxicating sense of elation and goodwill. This exhilaration of the moment grew and grew till it thrilled through me with almost overpowering intensity. Never again could I think evil, or ever again be at enmity with any man. All nature and all humanity were bathed in a rosy glowing radiancy, and life for the future seemed nought but buoyancy and light. Such experiences are only too rare, and they but too soon become blurred in the activities of daily intercourse and practical existence. Yet it is these few fleeting moments which are reality. The rest is the ephemeral, the unsubstantial. And that single hour on leaving Lhasa was worth all the rest of a lifetime."

This eloquent passage supports me in my conviction that whatever may be the occasional cause or causes of a transcendental experience, the real cause is the passage through the soul of a wave of pure and profound emotion which, as it passes, clarifies one's vision and exalts and quickens to an unwonted degree one's sensibility or power of reacting to the stimulus of environment. Under the influence of such a passing

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wave the soul widens its horizon indefinitely, and comes into contact with realities which had hitherto been unknown, unimagined, undreamed of. With this sudden expansion and illumination of consciousness and of the world which consciousness reveals, comes that restoration of one's lost sense of proportion and rectification of one's debased standard of values, of which I have already spoken.

To enter to-day into the subtleties of my own transcendental feelings is beyond my power. While they lasted I realised how inadequate was the basis of the current psychology—the psychology which studies normal and abnormal states of consciousness, but knows nothing and is content to know nothing of those which are supernormal; and I laughed to scorn many of the pretensions of the quasi-science of psychoanalysis, a science which has no doubt a great future but is still in its infancy, and has even more need than the orthodox psychology to accept and explore the mystical side of human nature. This much I remember distinctly. But I have another memory which seems to hold in solution all the lesser memories—(some of which have already faded, while others are gradually fading into oblivion)—of what passed during that crisis in my inner life; to hold these in solution, and in some sort to renew them, and admit them to a share in its own vividness and

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clarity. Out of all my experiences, justifying and unifying them, and absorbing them as it were into itself, emerged one triumphant conviction—a conviction which passed far beyond the normal limits of certitude—the conviction that the Universe is an organic, a living whole, that All is One.

From this state of spiritual exaltation I gradually returned to the “light of common day.” My transcendental experiences came to an end. But not my memory of them; nor my faith in their authenticity. I still cling to them tenaciously and trustfully, feeling sure that while they lasted I was no victim of illusion, but on the contrary saw things as they really are. If I have ever been the victim of illusion I was so before I went into the nursing home, and I am so now. The world of my normal experience is the dream world. The world of which I caught those fleeting experiences is real.

But what of the vision of cosmic unity, the vision which crowned and consummated my experience of a higher order of things? As a vision it died away. This was inevitable. But as a conviction it is still overwhelmingly strong. And one reason why it is so strong is that for many years, for the whole of my adult life I might almost say, I had been approaching it as a conclusion along the lines of adventurous meditation and imaginative thought. But the *conclusion*

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that All is One, however strongly I may have held it, and whatever light it may have thrown on my path, was but a poor and weak thing as compared with the *conviction*, the constraining sense of cosmic unity which emerged, as I have said, from my transcendental experiences in the nursing home. And though those experiences have passed away, and only the memory of them remains, so emancipative and illuminative is that memory that the conclusion has now finally merged itself in the conviction, and in doing so has widened its own range beyond all the horizons of my speculative thought, and raised to the highest imaginable power its influence over my life.

CHAPTER II

A PRELIMINARY EXPLANATION

ALL is One. Does not an insidious error lurk in these simple words? When I say them, am I not making open profession of the deadliest of all heresies? For if I believe that they are true I must either deny God or identify him with the All. In other words, I must make my choice between atheism and pantheism, between the rejection and the degradation of the idea of God. It is but natural that the popular thought and the religious orthodoxy of the West should pass this judgment on my faith. But in doing so they will but expose and emphasise the inadequacy of their own outlook on existence. For they mean by the All a particular aspect of the All—the outward and visible aspect, the temporal and spatial Universe, the physical plane of the Universal Life. They mean what they miscall “nature”:

“The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,
the hills and the plains.”

A PRELIMINARY EXPLANATION

They mean this, and no more than this. Well, if they cannot think otherwise of the All, they must, of course, continue to seek for reality beyond it. But they must not imagine that I, who believe in the oneness of the All, endorse their arbitrary limitation of its infinite being.

How has this misconception of the infinitude of the Infinite come to dominate the religious thought of the West? Chiefly, I think, because we have allowed the average man to make and unmake our philosophies and our creeds. The average man instinctively takes for granted the intrinsic reality of the outward world. In his primitive days he found no difficulty in reconciling this crude materialism with an equally crude idealism; and he therefore peopled the outward world with "spirits," replicas, so to speak, of his own conscious self. With the development of his social life, with the expansion of the family into the group, the clan, the city, the nation, and the empire, those spirits gradually formed themselves into an invisible hierarchy, at the head of which were the "immortal Gods" of the great mythologies. When the Gods were dethroned by Jehovah—the jealous God of the Jews, who reigns in Christendom as God the Father, and in Islam as Allah—the whole hierarchy of spirits may be said to have passed away with them into exile. Potentially, not actually. Belief in nature spirits of various kinds lingered

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on, and still lingers among the peasantry in all Western lands. But, with the spread of education and the development of urban life, these beliefs have fallen more and more into disrepute; and though they are slow in dying they have long been as good as dead. Religious orthodoxy, too, has its hierarchy of spirits—"angels and arch-angels and all the company of heaven"; but as these dwell beyond the confines of "nature," I need not say more about them than that they have shared to some extent, especially in Protestant countries, in the discredit which has befallen the nature spirits of popular belief.

The animism which peopled the outward world with nature spirits was the instinctive protest of man's heart against the materialism of his conscious thought. The protest was, as we have seen, subconscious. The difficulty of reconciling the reality of the spirit world with the self-existence of the material world was not felt till a later and more sophisticated age. When the difficulty began to be felt animism fell into disrepute, and supernaturalism took its place. From one point of view this was a gain; for it delivered men from thralldom to a host of petty and vexatious superstitions, and it made possible the scientific exploration of the physical world. From another point of view it was a great loss. The disruption of the universe, as the higher pantheism understands the word, into Nature,

A PRELIMINARY EXPLANATION

and the Supernatural world, besides causing endless confusion of mind, has given an immense impetus to materialism in thought, in sentiment, and in conduct, from the effect of which we have long suffered, and shall long continue to suffer. For, in emptying Nature of her own spiritual life, and transferring this, under the name of God—a name which connotes supreme reality, supreme goodness, supreme beauty—to another world, supernaturalism left to Nature nothing but her own material framework, with the inevitable result that as belief in the supernatural waned—(which it was predestined to do owing to its roots being suspended in mid air, so to speak, instead of being anchored in the soil of experience)—the material world came to be regarded as the all in all of existence. That the material world is continuous in all its dimensions with *Nature* is the assumption which is common to both materialism and supernaturalism. The difference between the two philosophies is that supernaturalism supplements Nature with the Supernatural world, wherein it provides an asylum for the spiritual realities which the heart discerns, but to which sense-bound reason is blind; whereas materialism rejects the supernatural, and gives a mechanistic explanation of life, on all its levels from the lowliest to the most divine.

In both these quarters of thought the pantheistic idea is sure to be misinterpreted, and

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therefore summarily rejected. As materialism is debarred by its mechanistic theory of things from having any commerce with the idea of God, its rejection of the pantheistic idea need not disquiet us. But the rejection of the idea by religious orthodoxy does at least demand the courtesy of an attempted explanation.

Let me then assure the theist (as he would no doubt call himself) that my interpretation of the word *universe* differs profoundly from his. For him the universe seems to be nothing more than the outward and visible world, stretching away indeed into the infinitudes of time and space, but having no life except what emanates from a source beyond itself, and therefore, *a fortiori*, no indwelling soul. Sometimes he speaks of the outward and visible world as Nature; but as a rule he means by Nature the way of the universe rather than the universe itself. I mean by the universe much more than he does. I mean the world of Nature, with all that therein is, *plus* the supernatural world, with all that therein is, *plus*—above all—the gulf which, in his view of things, separates the two worlds, and into which (as I have said elsewhere) drains unceasingly the reality of the lower world and the actuality of the higher. And I think of these three—the “natural” world, the supernatural world, and the fathomless gulf that separates them—not as three but

A PRELIMINARY EXPLANATION

as one. I think of them as fused, so to speak, into one indivisible whole ; and I identify this whole, and nothing less and nothing other than this whole, with God. And my use of the word *universe* is, I think, correct. For the word, if we go back to its derivation, means the all of being, the sum total of existent things. Words have obligations of their own which we ought to respect. Such a phrase as “a plurality of universes” is obviously self-contradictory. If I am right in assuming that the word universe is all-comprehensive, then the question at issue between the theist and the pantheist is this : Is the universe to be thought of as divided into two dis severed worlds, or as being an indivisible whole ? Theism takes the former view of it ; pantheism, the latter.

But the theist may well ask me to define my position more clearly than I have yet attempted to do. Have I any right to identify the universe, even in the widest possible sense of the word, with God ? May I remind the theist that the identification of the universe with God was done for me, not by me ? The word God has been put to such base uses and has such unhappy associations that I should have been well content to pass it by. But I could not but accept and ratify the deification of the All when it was presented to me as a logical inference from my primary assumption. For if we mean anything

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by the word God we mean what is absolutely real. And if my primary assumption is justified, it stands to reason that the universe itself, in all its unity and totality, is the only thing of which absolute reality can be predicated. But here a practical difficulty confronts me. Owing to man's life being immersed in matter, his thought is to a large extent limited, or at least conditioned, by sense-perception. One result of this is that, however much we may try to expand and sublimate our conception of the universe, we must needs think of it as extended; extended in the first instance in time and space, and then with a more general extension, of which the extension in time and space is at once basic and symbolical. To think otherwise, to think of the universe as concentrated in its own essence, or at least to sustain that thought for more than a timeless moment, is a task of almost insuperable difficulty.

Yet the difficulty must be faced and if possible overcome. A favourite argument of the theist is to point to a chair or a table, to a stone or a lump of clay, and say to the pantheist: "This is a part of the universe; therefore on your showing it is divine." So far as this argument is based on the confusion between the universe and the visible world, it has already been answered. Yet in principle it still holds good. So long as we think of the universe as extended,

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it is open to the theist to say : If the All is divine then this thing or that thing, being a part of the All, must needs be divine. The answer to this argument is that when we think of the universe as extended, or as an aggregate of parts, we are not thinking of it as it really is. What is real and therefore divine is the One in the Many, the whole as a whole, the universe conceived of as concentrated in and unified by its own essential principle, whatever that may be. The part, as a part, is so far from being divine that it is not even real. Severed, in our thought, from the tree of life to which it belongs, it is no better than a withered branch. What differentiates the higher from the lower pantheism is that the former bases its faith in God on its conviction that All is One.

Who, then, it will be asked, can see the universe as it really is ? God, and God alone. What the Real is in itself is known only to the Real. The true, the ultimate vision of cosmic unity, the vision of the One, the Real, the Divine, is not for man. Does it follow that pantheism is a barren and inoperative creed, a creed which has no bearing on character or conduct ? By no means. The vision of the Real is not for man. But the dream of attaining to that vision is the breath of man's higher life ; and so long as he cherishes the dream and

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is loyal to it, it will be its own fulfilment and its own reward.

Men are apt to assume that the universe is itself what it seems to be to them. This primary delusion is at the root of much of what is unsound in their thought and their faith. The universe is in itself what it seems to be to itself—what it seems to be to God. It does not follow that we are all equally ignorant of what it really and intrinsically is. The universe, in the larger and deeper sense of the word, presents a thousand different aspects to a thousand different minds. It means one thing for the war profiteer, another thing for the hero in the trenches ; one thing for the simple-minded peasant, another thing for the cultured scholar ; one thing for the sensualist, another thing for the saint ; one thing for the heartless coquette, another thing for the devoted mother. And these various visions cannot all be equally true. The saint is nearer to the heart of things than the sensualist ; the hero in the trenches than the war-profiteer. The range of variation in man's vision of reality is immense. There are persons for whom the vision does not materially differ, as far as we can judge, from that which is enjoyed by a ruminating cow. There are others who stand on so high a level of spiritual development that their vision of reality is for many of us an inspiring and illuminating ideal,

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beyond which we scarcely dare to look lest we should be blinded by excess of light. Yet there must needs be heights of spiritual reality beyond those which these seers and "masters" have reached. And so, looking around with an ever-widening horizon, and looking upward from height to height, we must needs dream at last of a vision which is adequate to its infinite object, the vision of the All by the All, of the One by the One. It is the universe, as seen by its own all-seeing eye, as seen by that quintessential reality which we call its soul,—it is this and nothing less than this which I think of as divine. For

"God alone can see God's glory. God alone
can feel God's love."

CHAPTER III

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF SPECULATIVE THOUGHT

ALL is God because All is One. And All is One because All is God. Each of these propositions proves the other, and neither admits of further proof. But proof, in the logical sense of the word, is not the only thing that generates conviction; and if I cannot otherwise make good the idea of cosmic unity, I can at least try to show that it is the goal—or shall I say the vanishing point?—on which many lines of human adventure and human experience converge.

I will begin with the movement of speculative thought. Each of us is a speculative thinker, whether he intends to be so or not. Each of us, as I have already said, has his own vision of the universe, his own outlook on life. As a rule we allow others to formulate our philosophy for us; and we repeat, with indolent docility, what they have taught us to say. In such cases

SPECULATIVE THOUGHT

the real philosophy of a man is buried in his subconscious self. The chief factor in determining the general trend of one's philosophy is what I may call temperamental bias. When a man is so far aware of the bias of his thought as to wish to justify it to his reason, he begins to philosophise. And when, by an ingenious camouflage of argument, he succeeds at last in concealing his bias from his own consciousness and persuading himself that he is a wholly disinterested seeker for truth, he becomes a philosopher, in the stricter and more technical sense of the word.

Temperamental bias takes a man in one or other of two opposite directions, the difference between which corresponds to the difference between conscious thought and subconscious feeling. Consciously the average man is a materialist. I mean by this that he instinctively takes for granted the intrinsic reality of the outward and visible world. He takes for granted that the world which reveals itself to him through the medium of his bodily senses is in itself what it seems to be—seems to be to him, and to all other persons whose senses are normal and healthy like his own. In his subconscious self he has a different criterion and therefore a different standard of reality. He takes for granted the intrinsic reality of the percipient soul or self—of his own soul

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in the first instance, and then of all other souls. It is not until he begins to meditate on the larger problems of existence, that the difference between the two criteria of reality begins to reveal itself. Then his temperamental bias comes into play. If his bias in favour of the reality of the outward world is stronger than his bias in favour of the reality of the soul or self, he will have the courage of his instinctive conviction and will try to work out for himself a materialistic system of thought.

The function of philosophy is to determine what is ultimately real—to determine this, not intuitively, not by a flash of emotional insight, but by thinking the problem out in all its essential bearings. It follows that the particular problem which confronts the materialist is that of determining what is ultimately real in that outward and visible world which for him is alone real. It will not take him long to discover that his primary assumption—that the outward world is in itself what it seems to be to man's perceptive faculties—breaks down when seriously tested. For in the first place the outward world is in a state of perpetual flux, its appearance changes from season to season, from day to day, and even from hour to hour. And in the second place—and this is more to the point—its appearance varies with the individuality of each percipient, varies

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(one might almost say) from eye to eye, from ear to ear and, above all, from heart to heart. Is the outward world intrinsically beautiful? So far as man's æsthetic enjoyment of it goes, there is almost continuous gradation from the zero of total insensibility to the opposite pole of passionate delight. Are we, then, to say that the outward world is intrinsically beautiful, whether it seems to be so or not? If the materialist answers *Yes* to this question he will surely incur the reproach of having abandoned his own criterion of reality. Even as regards the more material qualities of colour and sound there is so much diversity in our experiences that we are sometimes tempted to assume that in each individual case what seems to be is the product of two factors—the "thing-in-itself" and the percipient eye or ear. But if colour, for example, is in any degree in the eye that sees it, we cannot predicate reality of it—the ultimate reality which we are presumably in search of—as a property of the outward world. Of what then in the outward world can we predicate reality? If beauty, colour and sound are unreal, or only partly real, as the materialist measures reality, where shall reality be found? When once this unweaving of the fabric of the outward world has begun, where will it stop?

At this point the materialist, who is seldom a

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profound thinker, may well begin to look about him for help and guidance. His initial assumption that palpability is the proof and measure of reality has failed him. What is to take its place? Let him reassure himself. Help will be forthcoming. Physical science will come to his rescue. Or rather, to state the case with greater accuracy, the man of science will come to the rescue of the man in the street (who may, for aught we know, be his other self). For reasons of its own, physical science finds it convenient to assume that analysis of the palpable is the pathway to reality. By reality it means underlying substance and underlying law. This assumption answers the purpose of science, which is at heart a search for fundamental unity; and it has never found it needful to question its validity. But analysis of the palpable leads in the direction of the impalpable; and in point of fact the progress of science, in its search for the *primordia rerum*, has been marked by a continuous descent into an ever-increasing impalpability, a descent which has not yet touched bottom. There was indeed a time when science seriously believed that in resolving matter into atoms—"the bricks of the universe"—it had reached the bedrock of reality. But the discovery of radium awoke it from that comfortable dream. Atoms have now melted away into electrons; and these in

SPECULATIVE THOUGHT

their turn will melt away into—who knows what? A physicist is reported to have said that the explorer in these matters is being lured on by physics into metaphysics; and one gathers from this that science is beginning to realise the force of the saying: “Too far east is west.”

Méanwhile, it is clear that in invoking the aid of physical science the materialist tacitly abandons his own primitive assumption that the palpable is the real. For this he substitutes a new criterion of reality, the application of which may have the most revolutionary consequences, but which for the time being seems to satisfy both physical science and popular thought—the assumption that what is ultimate in the analysis of the palpable, in the analysis of “matter,” is the real.

In accepting this criterion of reality the materialistic thinker ceases to think. He hands over the quest of ultimate reality to physical science, and admits by implication that his own quest has been a failure. As a speculative adventure his quest has ended where it began—in denial of the spiritual. The denial is indeed dogmatic now instead of being merely instinctive, but that is all he has gained by taking a path which was predestined to return to its own starting point.

The one fact that emerges from the failure of

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his quest is that neither the crude materialistic criterion of reality not the quasi-scientific amendment of it, can satisfy man as a speculative thinker. What acceptance of that criterion does is to bring the quest of ideal truth to an abrupt end, and so make null and void the very *raison d'être* of speculative thought. What, then, is to be our criterion of reality? Man's bias in favour of the outward world has led him to conclude that what is ultimate in analysis is real, and his acceptance of this ideal has ended in his ceasing to think. If he desires to go on thinking he must take the alternative path to that which has misled him—the path into which his subconscious bias in favour of the inward life will take him if he will but trust himself to its guidance. He must assume that what is ultimate in synthesis is real, and must set out in quest of the goal to which this assumption directs him.

He will never reach that goal, and therefore he will never cease to think. Materialism loses itself in physical science, and, as a system of thought, ends where it began. Idealism—as we may call the speculative quest of what is ultimate in synthesis—is a genuine adventure into the infinite. As such it provides the only effective antidote to the desire for finality, which has been the most serious of all obstacles to human progress. But though the idealist will never reach

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his goal, he knows beforehand—the paradox is unavoidable—what his goal will be. *What is ultimate in synthesis is the universe itself conceived of as an organic whole.* The conception of cosmic unity is the highest which the idealist, following the path of synthetic thought, can hope to reach. But when he has reached it, *as an abstract conception*, he will find that its meaning is unfathomable, and that the attempt to fathom it will keep his thought busy till thought has been superseded, *at infinity*, by some more intimate mode of communion with the Real.

In fine, it is only by postulating the Oneness of the All that we can set the thinker a task which is worthy of the infinitude of the mind of man.

CHAPTER IV

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF ÆSTHETIC DELIGHT

THE object of æsthetic delight is beauty. What is the ultimate object? Is it not ideal beauty? But what is ideal beauty, and where is it to be found? As a theme for human meditation the idea of the beautiful is at once alluring and baffling. It dances ahead of us like a will-o'-the-wisp. Yet we cannot choose but follow it, even though we know in our hearts that it will lead us at last into a morass of difficulty and doubt.

As a rule we predicate beauty of things which we perceive through our bodily senses. But this limitation is not of the essence of beauty. Let us recall some familiar usages of the word. We speak of a beautiful scene, a beautiful day, a beautiful sunset, a beautiful flower, a beautiful building, a beautiful picture, a beautiful statue, a beautiful poem, a beautiful anthem, and so on. In each of these cases there is a direct appeal to

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the sense of sight or of hearing,* but there is also much more than this. Again, we speak of a beautiful soul, a beautiful life, a beautiful deed, a beautiful romance. We use such phrases as the beauty of holiness, the beauty of self-sacrifice, beautifully clear, beautifully simple, beautifully planned, beautifully thought out, and so on. What have all these usages of the word in common? In every case we have a percipient subject, and a perceived object. So far as the percipient subject is concerned there seem to be two essential elements in the sense of the beautiful—*direct perception* and a *feeling of delight*. When the direct perception of a certain object generates delight in the percipient subject, then the latter may be said to be in touch with the beautiful. But what are the qualities in the perceived object, the perception of which generates delight in the percipient subject? I think it will be found that they fall for the most part under two chief heads—*harmony* and *rhythm*,† the essence of each of these being the subordination of the Many to the One.

By harmony we mean internal agreement.

* Gratification of the senses of touch and taste can scarcely be said to be æsthetic. The sense of smell is on the border line. So far as I am concerned, the scent of the early summer morning does undoubtedly generate æsthetic delight. So does the "scent of the infinite sea."

† As I am no musician, it will be understood that I am not using either of these words in its technical sense.

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When all the parts in a complex whole are working together for a common end we have harmony. We feel that the parts are at peace with one another, and are animated, even though they be inanimate, by a latent spirit of comradeship. But when the parts, instead of co-operating, seem to be quarrelling among themselves, we have discord. We may not be able to see this in the case of colour or sound; for in these harmony is something primitive and elemental—regulated no doubt by laws of its own—which appeals directly to the trained or the unspoiled eye or ear, but which cannot yet be explained in terms of co-operation for a given end. We have, however, the feeling, perhaps because of the pain which they cause, that discordant sounds and colours are on bad terms with one another: we speak of colours “swearing at each other”; and this expression suggests that, instead of working together for a common end, they are falling out among themselves. And the moment we get beyond what is primitive, the moment we begin to deal with what is complex, with phenomena of growth or life, for example, or with the products of human thought, we find that what is essential in the harmony which we admire is the internal agreement which is produced by the various parts working together for the well-being of the whole, or perhaps for some ulterior end. Let us take the case of a “beau-

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tiful" mathematical theorem or a "beautifully" planned machine. In each of these cases reason analyses the whole into its parts, unravels the subtle thought of the discoverer or the inventor, and gradually works out in all its simplified intricacy his perfect adaptation of means to ends. But when at last, reason having done its work of analysing and unravelling, the perfection of the adaptation reveals itself to, or rather flashes upon, the student's mind, his direct perception of harmony, of the internal agreement of a host of details in serving a common end, awakes his æsthetic sense to sudden activity, and causes it to secrete delight. Then he uses, and is justified in using, the word *beautiful*, which might at first sight seem inapplicable to a theorem or a machine.

The second constituent principle in beauty is *rhythm*. With rhythm comes in the element of movement, flow, development, life. Wherever there is the beauty of harmony there is also either the actuality or the suggestion of rhythmic movement, of movement, that is, which is unified by being directed towards a central end. Harmony and rhythm are indispensable to each other. Deprived of the other each ceases to be itself. When there is harmony among the parts of a complex whole, owing to their all working together for a common end, the movement towards the given end is rhythmical, such difficulties as may arise in its course being swept

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along, as it were, in its triumphant advance towards the desired goal. When harmony is imperfect, when there is internal discord and friction, the rhythm of the movement is necessarily defective, the flow being like that of a rock-thwarted torrent or of a river which is split into various channels by banks of sand. The more—or less—complete the harmony of the various parts, the more—or less—perfect is the rhythm of their combined movement.

We have considered, from the point of view of harmony, two familiar instances of the use of the word beauty. Let us now consider some other instances, and see if in each case harmony and rhythm are constituent elements in the effect which we call beautiful. A glowing sunset is a thing of beauty. Here we have a harmony of colour, and the rhythm of continuous change. But we have more than this. In and through the emotion which the more manifest beauty of the sunset kindles we seem to discern a deeper harmony, and a more majestic rhythm, the harmony of sun and earth and atmosphere and clouds, all working together for a common purpose in obedience to a central law, and the rhythm of their movement from hour to hour towards the end, whatever it may be, which they all serve. A seemingly accidental collocation of clouds gave us the glory of colour which unveiled to us the deeper beauty to which our

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souls awoke. For there is always something symbolical in beauty, something suggestive of a beauty beyond what we at first discern. And in this higher and purer and remoter beauty there is again a suggestion of beauty beyond itself. And so on, as the soul ascends towards the fountain-head of all beauty, towards the beauty which is symbolical no longer, but is itself symbolised by all beautiful things. What this is we will presently ask ourselves.

Let us next consider the beauty of a star-lit night. Here we have a harmony of darkness and light—the harmony of contrast—and the rhythm of the procession of the stars across the vault of the midnight sky. But again we have much more than this. Through the kindling of our emotion by the spectacle of the pageant of the night—emotion which our knowledge of astronomy intensifies and heightens—we seem to discern the harmony and the rhythm of the whole spatial Universe, which in their turn symbolise the harmony and the rhythm of the living Whole.

In a beautiful life we have harmony in the working together of all the man's desires and powers for a single worthy end—the service of man, let us say, or the doing the will of God ; and we have rhythm in the flow of a life which is dominated by a single purpose—a life which is no mere succession of days and years, but a

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growth in grace, a movement towards an ideal goal.

In a beautiful statue we have the harmony of form and proportion, and the suggestion of the rhythmic movement of life; and (if the statue is the expression of spiritual vision) we have the deeper harmony and the deeper rhythm which are symbolised by these.

In a beautiful decorative border we have harmony in the floral or geometrical design and the general scheme of colour, and rhythm in the continuous flow of the pattern.

These examples have, I hope, helped to explain what I meant when I said that subordination of the Many to the One was of the essence of both harmony and rhythm. The difference between the two in this respect is that in harmony the One seems to be in control of the Many, whereas in rhythm it seems to be ever emerging in triumph from their flowing stream.

It follows from this conception of beauty that one of the chief elements in æsthetic sensibility, which, as we know from experience, varies widely from heart to heart, is what I may call synoptic vision, the power of discerning the One in the Many, of gathering together, in this case or that, a multitude of diverse parts and details, and seeing these, at a glance, in their unity and totality—in other words, as a beautiful whole. In some persons this synoptic faculty, this sense

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of wholeness, is so strong as to become creative. Plotinus has said that "a beautiful whole demands beauty in the parts." There I think he is wrong. It is possible, for example, for a great artist to find the makings of a picture in some scene in an industrial region in which a less artistic eye would see nothing but what was unlovely—at best, uninteresting and commonplace; at worst, ugly and repulsive. The great artist looks at the scene from a point of view which enables him, as it were, to force the details into harmony with one another, with the result that, first in his vision and then on his canvas, they so group themselves together as to build up a picture which is worthy of his brush. Plotinus is assuredly right when he says that "the beauty must govern throughout;" but it does not follow that the things which beauty governs are beautiful before they submit to its rule. In the case which I am considering, the artist—to quote Plotinus again—"has grouped and co-ordinated what from a diversity of parts was to become [in his vision and under his hand] a unity; [he] has wrought the diversity to a single determined reality, stamping on it the unity of harmonious coherence." The harmonious coherence which results in beauty is quite compatible—so great is the transforming power of the "Forming Idea"—with unloveliness in the cohering parts.

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What, then, is the ultimate object of æsthetic delight? Let us marshal our premises and see to what conclusion they direct us. Harmony and rhythm seem to be of the essence of beauty. The subordination of the Many to the One seems to be of the essence of these—of harmony in being, or harmony proper, and of harmony in becoming, or rhythm. And the power of directly perceiving wholeness, or unity in diversity, seems to be of the essence of that sensitiveness to beauty which we call the æsthetic sense. Does it not follow that what is finally beautiful is the Universe itself, the cosmos, the ordered Whole? And does it not follow that to behold the Universe as an ordered whole, to see, as by a flash of piercing light, the perfect unity of its infinite diversity, would be the supreme achievement of the æsthetic sense, and that the enjoyment of that vision would be the last term in æsthetic delight? In the Universe, if indeed its All is One, we have the perfection of harmony and the perfection of rhythm, and therefore ideal beauty. This is the archetypal beauty, of which harmony and rhythm, wherever we may discern them, are at once the reminder, the foretaste, and the fitful gleam.

How shall a man fit himself to gaze unblinded on the beauty of this One in All? We are setting him an impossible task, and it is well that we should do so. The æsthetic sense,

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however sedulously it may be cultivated, can no more hope to see the splendour of ideal beauty than reason, however diligently we may exercise it, can hope to fathom the meaning of ideal truth. Yet the attempt to fathom the meaning of ideal truth will set philosophy a million tasks. And the attempt to behold ideal beauty will provide creative art with a million themes. It is possible that the final achievement of reason will be that of thinking itself off the plane of thought, and it is possible that the final achievement of the æsthetic sense will be that of developing its sense of wholeness until it has lost its identity. For the part can see but the parts. The shadow can see but shadows. If a man would know the Real, he must try to find his real self; and if he would see the Whole, he must try to make himself whole by growing into oneness with the Whole. And this is an effort in which all the sides of his being must co-operate. The Beatific Vision—if I may repeat words which I have used elsewhere—is the revelation of the “unbeholden essence” of all things to the spiritual senses in their totality, to the soul acting as its own medium and its own organ of perception. The last term in æsthetic delight is also the last term in the well-being of the soul.

CHAPTER V

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF SOCIAL SERVICE

THERE was a time when the organisation of human society had the merit—or demerit—of extreme simplicity. Each of us belonged to one social community and one only—the tribe. The tribesman gave to the tribe the whole of his loyalty and the whole of his service. His tribal self dominated his individual self and repressed the outgrowth of his ideal self. He lived his life in and through the collective life of the tribe. His very consciousness was tribal. He thought as the tribe thought, felt as the tribe felt, did as the tribe did. He seemed to be animated and directed by a tribal spirit akin to the “group soul” of the occultist, which is supposed to look after the welfare and order the goings of each species of animal or plant. The welfare of the tribe was for him an end in itself. As such it limited his outlook on life and determined his sense of social and, to a large

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extent, of moral obligation. Even his duty to his own family was a matter of secondary importance in his eyes. As an individual he was unselfish and self-sacrificing in the highest degree. He lived for the tribe, worked for it assiduously, and was always ready to die for it. But the tribe itself was as selfish as its individual members were the reverse. Too often it cared only for itself, and could not look beyond the horizon of its own apparent interests. It was ready to attack and plunder its neighbours on the slightest provocation, and it carried on hereditary feuds which lasted for centuries. Also it waged war with an inhuman savagery which has never been equalled except in the religious wars of Christendom and of Islam. Mercy and pity were words which had no meaning for it beyond its own frontiers. If it was in a position to do so, it would massacre all the members of a hostile tribe—men, women and children—without the slightest compunction.* If it ever co-operated with its neighbours it did

* When the Swazis were invited, some forty years ago, to join the British forces in their invasion of Basuto Land, they were told that they might have all the cattle they could capture, but were on no account to injure the Basuto women and children. On hearing this, their chief said to McLeod, the British Resident in Swaziland: "Mafu, do you like rats?" "No," said McLeod. "In fact," said the chief, "you kill them whenever you can." "Yes," said McLeod. "But surely," said the chief, "you spare the females and little rats."

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so under the pressure of a common danger ; and the bond of union was broken as soon as the danger was past. It was by conquest rather than by voluntary co-operation that the amalgamation of lesser with larger tribes was as a rule effected.

This is a bold and uncompromising statement which requires, I need hardly say, to be freely discounted. I have made many generalisations ; and for the sake of brevity and clearness I have ignored all exceptions to them and all modifying circumstances. Yet the statement is on the whole substantially true. One fact which emerges from our study of the tribal stage of social development is that in it a high degree of unselfishness on the part of the individual was compatible with an equally high degree of selfishness on the part of the community. Or we may put it this way : as an individual member of the community the tribesman was a pattern of unselfishness ; as a sharer in its corporate life and corporate consciousness he was too often a monster of selfishness.

Since then there has been an immense advance in the complexity of man's social life, with the details of which we need not now concern ourselves. So great has been the multiplication of communities, or rather of types of community, that it would be difficult to-day to find in any civilised country a man who did not belong to at

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least six or eight different social units. The same man, for example, would be a citizen of his own country, of his own province or county, of his own township or other autonomous local area, he would be a member of a religious body, of a trade union, of the local branch of that trade union, of a mutual benefit society, of a parish council, or a cricket or football club, of a musical or natural history society, and so on. With the multiplication of communities came the inevitable weakening of the sentiment of communal devotion. The individual could not be expected to give to each of many communities or even to any one of them the whole-hearted devotion which he gave to the tribe in the days when he lived for it and it lived for him. And, with the weakening of communal devotion, the individual self, which had previously been in bondage to the communal, began to be active and aggressive, while the ideal self awoke from its slumber and began to put forward legitimate but exorbitant claims.

Then began in each human breast a civil war which took many forms. The individual self warred against the communal. The communal self against the ideal. The ideal against the individual. While the various communities and causes to which the individual owed allegiance advanced conflicting claims to his devotion,—religious zeal pulling him in one direction,

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patriotism in another, local prejudice in a third, caste feeling in a fourth, economic interest in a fifth, and so on. And, to make matters worse, the conflicts among the three typical selves interwove themselves with the conflicts among the competing claims of the various communities and causes, and produced endless and inextricable confusion. And the more progress man made in the direction of what he called civilisation, the more complicated did his social life become and the more numerous the rivalries and conflicts which were fostered by its growing complexity. At the present moment, owing to the disintegrative and demoralising influences of the late war, the turmoil of our social, political and economic life is probably more violent and more chaotic than it has ever been.

Let us examine one or two phases of the existing unrest so as to see what provision, if any, can be made for the eventual reintroduction of order into our social life. In some of the labour strikes which have recently occurred in this country we seem to have returned to the days of tribal loyalty and tribal selfishness, the devotion of the strikers to their union being as conspicuous as their callous indifference to the well-being of the workers in other industries and to the prosperity of the country as a whole. In such cases the mistake which the strikers have made is that of regarding

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the material well-being of the workers in their own industry as an end in itself; as if any one industry could permanently prosper while the selfishness of its workers was impoverishing the rest of the nation and causing slackness of trade and unemployment on a large scale.

A similar mistake has been made by the ultra-nationalists in certain European countries, who have combined a passionate zeal for the aggrandisement of their respective nations with an entire disregard of the well-being of Europe as a whole,—well-being in which, if they would only work for it, all the nations might ultimately share.

In these days of wild unrest, when our thoughts are turned towards social and political reconstruction, and when, with that end in view, the various communities to which each of us belongs are putting forward conflicting claims to our support and service, such mistakes are all too easily made. But they must, at whatever cost, be corrected. The tendency to regard as an end in itself what has its real meaning by reference to an end beyond itself, is the fundamental and ever-recurring delusion which has vitiated our social atmosphere ever since our social life began. The problem for the reformer is to find an object for man's loyalty which he may rightly regard as an end in itself—an object so large, so far off, and yet of such supreme

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magnetic power, as to leave no room for the intrusion of self-interest into the devotion which it inspires. Until this has been done we shall continue to be borne hither and thither by the cross currents of a seething whirlpool of strife,—a whirlpool which may from time to time be subdued by strong and resolute rule into the semblance of sullen apathy, but will always be ready to break out into open violence when restraint is removed or even appreciably weakened.

How is this problem to be solved? Let us take the case of the striker whose devotion to his union is imperilling the prosperity of other industries. What he needs is to learn to take into consideration the well-being of the rest of the community; in other words, to subordinate devotion to his union, which has a strong strain of selfishness in it, to devotion to his country. But the economic well-being of one's country, though a worthier end of action than the material well-being of the workers in a particular industry, is not an end in itself. Let us take the case of an ultra-patriotic Pole or other national who, in his zeal for the aggrandisement of his own country, is helping to perpetuate chaos in Europe. What he needs is to learn to subordinate devotion to his country to devotion to the European community of nations, in the general prosperity or general distress of

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which his own country is bound to share. Or again, let us take the case of the white man who, in his zeal for the purity of his race, a motive which has in it a considerable alloy of economic selfishness, would exclude all coloured labour from his own country or continent, thereby exciting racial passion and prejudice and preparing the way for war on a vast scale. What he needs is to learn to subordinate devotion to his own race and his own type of civilisation to devotion to the whole human commonwealth. The socialist who carries his zeal for economic reform so far as to preach an internationalism of class hatred would do well to learn the same lesson.

In each of these cases the larger loyalty may be trusted to purge the lesser of some of its selfishness, and to that extent to introduce an element of order into the existing chaos of unrest. But what is the ultimate object of social service? Is the welfare of the human commonwealth an end in itself? I do not think so. If it were, we should be at a loss to determine what constituted the welfare of the human commonwealth, and we should therefore lose sight of our goal in the very act of aiming at it. For, as far as our experience goes, the welfare of a community is always dependent, in greater or less degree, on its relation to other communities, relations in which there is a

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reciprocity of interest, and which it enters into either directly or through the medium of some larger organisation to which it and the other communities belong. When Germany made its bid for world-power and in doing so made its final appeal to the patriotism of its citizens, it misdirected their devotion by presenting to them its own aggrandisement as an end in itself. This meant that, while claiming selfless devotion from them, it was appealing to their latent selfishness, by setting an end before them which, if realised, would bring them material advantages of various kinds. And it was because of this base alloy in it that their patriotism at last gave way. For if and so far as service to a community is tainted with selfishness, it will make for disunion and strife within the limits of the community, and so prove ineffective even from the more utilitarian point of view. But if it is to purge itself of every taint of selfishness, it must always look beyond its own immediate aim. In other words it must always have at the heart of it devotion to a larger community than that to which it is consciously given.

Let us assume, for argument's sake, that the League of Nations has developed into a Commonwealth which embraces the whole human race, and which has a central seat and an organised system of government. Is the well-being of

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this community the highest end that its citizens can set before themselves ? Yes, and No. Yes, if we mean by its well-being the realisation of its own ideal perfection, the pursuit of which would carry it, and us with it, beyond itself. No, if we mean anything less than this. What will the Human Commonwealth give to its citizens in return for the service that it will demand from them ? Many things that they will value. By abolishing war, by establishing universal free trade, by substituting co-operation for competition, by the intensive development of the material resources of Nature, it will give a marked impetus to the prosperity of mankind. The diminution of waste and friction will be so great that the average level of prosperity will be appreciably raised. Men will be better housed, better fed, better clothed ; their health will be better cared for ; their hours of work will be shortened ; they will be more fully provided with the means of self-improvement ; and so on. All this is good as far as it goes. But is this all that the Commonwealth will be able to do for its citizens ? What of the soul ? What of the human ideal ? Will not the Commonwealth help the citizen to find his soul, to realise his ideal ? But how can it do this ? What task can it set him, what appeal can it make to him, which will induce him to lift up his eyes and his heart ? It can ask him for loyal service, and he

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will give this freely and willingly in gratitude for all the good things which it gives him. But those good things are all more or less material, and his gratitude for them will therefore have a strain of self-interest in it which will keep it below the level of spiritual devotion. What higher task can the Commonwealth set him? What higher task can he set himself? As the best service that the Commonwealth can render to the citizen is that of helping him to realise his own ideal and raise the level of his individual life, so the best service that he can render to the Commonwealth is that of helping it to realise its own ideal and raise the level of its corporate life. But, with this end in view, he must needs ask himself why the Commonwealth is there, what is its purpose and its function, and what end it serves or ought to serve beyond itself.

If the Human Commonwealth is, as some thinkers affirm, the largest of all the communities to which a man owes allegiance, if there is no larger community to which it owes, and to which through it he owes, allegiance, if there is no end which he can help it to work for, and which through it he can work for, beyond itself, it is clear that in their relations to one another he and it are involved in a vicious circle from which there is no escape. In its demands for service it will appeal to more or less selfish motives, and in its rewards for service it will minister to

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more or less selfish desires, so that neither by him nor by it can man's life be raised to a higher plane than that of self-interest. And I can now see that the picture of universal peace and prosperity, under the ægis of the Human Commonwealth, which I have drawn is not in the least likely to be true to fact. For if the highest function of the Commonwealth is that of ministering to men's creature comforts, shortening their hours of work, raising their wages, improving the conditions under which they live, and the like, and if it is for the sake of these benefits that men are ready to work for the Commonwealth and give it loyal service, then, because they are still selfish at heart, they will be apt to ask from the Commonwealth more than it can give them, to complain that its favours have not been fairly distributed, and to quarrel among themselves for the "good things of life" which it is its mission, as they assume, to dispense. And so we shall have disunion and strife among men which may well end in the disruption of the Commonwealth into a number of warring communities, or rather—for I can now see that it was an over-bold effort of imagination to dream of the Commonwealth—which may well prevent it from ever coming to the birth.

The problem which we set ourselves of finding an object for man's loyalty which he might rightly regard as an end in itself, has not yet been

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solved. The service of Humanity is a worthy end of action, but it is not the highest, and so long as it claims to be the highest it will count for less in man's life than it would do if it were content to subordinate itself to a higher. What then, I ask once more, are we to regard as the ultimate object of social service? I can now give the answer to this question which I might have given when I first asked it. If we are not to stop short at the Human Commonwealth, if its well-being, as an object of human calculation and service, is not to be regarded as an end in itself, we must pass on beyond it to what is presumably the highest and widest of all communities, to the community which embraces all others and assigns them their several stations and degrees, to the universe itself, the ordered whole. If the All is indeed One, it must needs be the ultimate object of all service, all loyalty, all devotion ; it must needs be

“ the Receiver and the Lord
Of every sacrifice.”

That the social organisation of the universe is infinitely and unimaginably complex, that a whole hierarchy of social communities comes between the Human and the Cosmic Commonwealth, we may well believe. And we may well believe that its relation to this hierarchy

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determines, for the Human Commonwealth, its meaning, its function, and the secret of its real well-being. It is true that we know nothing of these intervening communities, nothing of our relations even to those which are nearest to us, nothing of our relations, through these, to the Infinite Whole. But we may be sure that in each of these the rule which I have formulated holds good : Devotion to a community, if it is to purge itself of every taint of selfishness, must always have at the heart of it devotion to a larger community—till we come at last to the largest of all.

But how can we give service to the Cosmic Commonwealth if we do not know what it demands from us, or how we can work for its well-being ? If we can do nothing else we can at least give it the service of the willing heart, the service of love and loyalty and the disinterested desire to serve. And wherever we may be, and through whatever stage of development we may be passing, we can begin to qualify ourselves for such service as it may demand from us, by trying to make the most of ourselves on all the planes of our being, by trying to develop to the uttermost all the parts and powers with which Nature has endowed us, by trying, above all, to learn the lesson of self-transcendence through self-sacrifice, and in doing so to escape from the prison of self into the life of the All. In thus

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trying to qualify ourselves for the service of the All we may perhaps be giving it the service that it values most. For to give itself to us, to pour into our hearts its life and its love, is perhaps its highest happiness, and its strongest desire. And perhaps the best service that we can render to it is that of throwing open the lock-gates of self, and giving free ingress to its intrushing tide.

CHAPTER VI

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF MORAL OBLIGATION

SELFISHNESS is the beginning and end of immorality. But the word "self" has an unlimited range of meaning, and complete transcendence of self is an ideal which can scarcely be realised. All moral acts are therefore, in some sense and some degree, self-regarding. It will be understood, then, that when I speak of selfishness as the beginning and end of morality, I mean by selfishness the indulgence of a lower at the expense of a higher self. If man had not many selves, or rather if his self was not a process, ranging between the opposite poles of individuality and universality, morality, in the proper sense of the word, would not be possible.

In the tribal stage of social development morality had three main features. It was a morality of *custom*. Much of what custom prescribed was unessential, not to say irrational. And it was strictly local in its range. In his

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dealings with other tribesmen, whether collectively or individually, the tribesman had little or no sense of moral obligation. His conscience, like his consciousness, was tribal rather than personal.

When the tribe, as the supreme social unit, was superseded by the city and the nation, a morality of *law* took the place of the morality of custom. Lawgivers arose, such as Solon, Lycurgus and Moses, and drew up elaborate codes by which the citizens were to regulate their lives. As a rule, the lawgivers claimed divine authority for their respective Laws. In one case, at least, the faith of the people in the divine origin of their Law was so strong that other peoples and other ages became infected with it. The Mosaic Law is still regarded in Christendom as having had behind it the will and the wisdom of the God of the Universe.

With the gradual break up of the tribal system came the gradual liberation of the polar selves of man's being, the individual self, and the universal or ideal self. When the tribe was the only social unit the communal was the only effective self. The individual self was sternly repressed by it. The ideal self was not allowed to awake from its slumber. But, with the growing complexity of man's social life, and the consequent weakening of the sentiment of communal devotion, the individual self began to assert itself,

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and the ideal self began to awake. And each of these saw in the other its hereditary and implacable enemy. For a time, indeed, the communal self, which had tyrannised over both, kept the peace between them by becoming the chief object of their respective antipathies. But, in and through its ostensible hostility to the communal self, each of these was feeling its way towards the declaration of war on the other. And, with the opening of their predestined duel, morality, in the proper sense of the word—the morality of freedom and conscience—began.

The liberation of the polar selves from communal control was a very slow process. The morality of custom was succeeded by the morality of law; and though the second morality was in many ways an advance on the first, there was not much more room in it for that freedom of choice, without which the morality of conscience, centring as it does in the struggle between the individual and the ideal self, cannot come into its own. Individualism and idealism were still officially frowned upon. Respect for the letter of the law, on the one hand curbed the desires and impulses of the individual citizen, and on the other hand left no place in his heart for the vision of the ideal.

The destruction by Republican Rome of the independent civic and national life of all the countries which bordered on the Mediterranean

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seaboard was followed by the decay of civic and national religion over the same area, and thus produced a state of religious and social chaos which prepared the way for the advent of a universal religion. Had such a religion been forthcoming it would have brought with it a universal morality. In other words, it would have given free play to the morality of conscience. For conscience is the universalising element in morality, resisting as it does on principle, and in the last resort successfully defying, the tyrannical pressure of custom and law. But the state of religious and social chaos for which the Roman career of conquest was responsible, though it left room for the morality of conscience to germinate, by provoking a reaction against itself, and thus emphasising the need for discipline and order in man's life, tended to throw the world back into the arms of the morality of law. And, as it happened, the universal religion for which the world was waiting, was given to it—my words are unavoidably paradoxical—by the one nation which remained national to the very end, the nation which successfully defied the efforts of Roman arms and Roman administration to subvert its nationality, and which found the central stronghold and rallying ground of its nationalism in a system of strictly legal morality which was to it at once a religion, a social polity, and a rule of daily life. For the Christians were

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originally a Jewish sect ; and when, after having long resisted their spiritual influence, the Western World succumbed to it and accepted Christianity as its religion, it took over with it the national Deity, the national Scriptures, and the legalism, though not the Law, of the Jews, thereby undoing in large measure the emancipative work of the Founder of the new religion, whose campaign against Pharisaism—that is, against strict Judaism—had been the central feature of his ministry. Thus from its very inception Christianity was, what it still is, a religion of compromise, a religion in which sectional and universal elements manage to exist, with more or less of mutual discomfort, side by side ; a religion whose Deity is on the one hand the God of a particular people, or a particular church, and on the other hand the God of the whole Universe ; a religion in whose morality conscience, though nominally held in high honour, has to fight for its life against a quasi-legal tyranny, casuistry having taken the place in Christendom of rabbinical interpretation in later Judaism, and the priest and the confessor having taken the places of the doctor and the scribe.

The effect of this strong sectional bias in what professes to be a universal religion, and of this strong legal bias in what professes to be a religion of freedom, has been to perpetuate the moral chaos which has prevailed since Christianity was

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born. In its dealings with conscience the Church has been as disingenuous as in its dealings with reason. It has professed to pay homage to each of these sovereign faculties, and has pretended to give them freedom. What it has really done has been to offer them freedom on condition that the first use they make of it is to submit themselves to ecclesiastical control. By keeping conscience in leading strings the Church has arrested the development of the higher morality. By perpetuating the vulgar confusion between intention and motive it has put a premium on self-deception. Above all, by claiming to have a monopoly of the Divine favour and guidance, it has tempted, if it has not actually taught, the faithful to regard obedience to itself as the first and last of virtues, and has thus allowed a quasi-mechanical conception of morality to overshadow the latent idealism of man's heart.

The time has come for us to remind ourselves that what is at once fundamental and ultimate in morality is the struggle between the individual and the ideal or universal self. The antithesis of the lower to the higher self will not carry us far enough. What is higher from one point of view may well be lower from another. A man may sacrifice himself to a community or a cause, only to find that he has made himself a partner in collective selfishness, and an accomplice in crime. He who wishes to do the right thing must

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as far as possible make sure that his motives are pure. This means that he must always be prepared to ask what seems to be the higher motive for its credentials, and to purify it, when these have been ascertained, from whatever taint of selfishness may be lurking in it. It is here that conscience comes into play. For one of the chief characteristics of conscience is its power of feeling and responding to the magnetic attraction of ideal good. It is in virtue of this power that it is able, by the use of a secret standard of its own, to distinguish the lower from the higher self, and so determine how far self-interest enters into the motives which actuate a man in a case of moral perplexity. When such a problem is set it, conscience will rely on itself rather than on the advice which it may be tempted to seek from priest or doctor, from handbook or code. For if and so far as it is healthily sensitive, it will penetrate far more deeply and subtly into the motives of the heart than any onlooker, even if he be an expert in casuistry, can hope to do. And it will be able to do this because it works subconsciously, because it is a *sense*—in the proper meaning of the word, a perceptive faculty which, guided by its instinctive tendency to turn towards the ideal and turn away from “self,” marshals its facts and makes its calculations so rapidly, that the result of them, the solution of its problem, the decision which it presents to the

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will, is almost the only step in the process of which it is clearly conscious.

I have said that, ever since the Christian era began, the state of morality in Christendom has been one of almost chaotic confusion. Just as in the sphere of religion there has been an unworkable compromise between the cult of a sectional and a universal deity, and therefore between dogmatism and spiritual freedom, so in the sphere of conduct there has been an unworkable compromise between the morality of law and the morality of conscience. And in each case the expansive, emancipative element has been nominally, the restrictive, repressive element has been really, in the ascendant.

But what was confusion before the Great War is to-day confusion worse confounded. Dogmatism in religion and legalism in morals have been judged by their fruits and found wanting; and a violent reaction against them has generated an almost unparalleled impatience of religious and moral restraint. Violence, dishonesty and incontinence are at present rampant in all parts of the civilised world: and it almost seems as if the whole structure of man's moral and social life had collapsed or was on the point of collapsing; as if the inverted ideal of "*Fay ce que vondras*" had finally triumphed; and as if we were about to witness a general return in morals to a state of primal chaos.

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What is really happening is that the morality of law has collapsed, and that the morality of conscience is not yet ready to take its place. It is to conscience, with its instinctive tendency to turn towards the magnetic pole of ideal good, that we must look for deliverance from our troubles. Again and again a finite and therefore a false and inadequate ideal has been imposed upon conscience by custom, by law, by tradition, by ecclesiastical control ; but sooner or later the secret affinity of conscience with ideal good has re-asserted itself, the false ideal has been discredited, and the movement towards the magnetic pole has begun anew.

If we have never done so before, the time has now come for us to ask ourselves what is the magnetic pole of man's being ? What is ideal good ? Were it possible for the subconscious bias of conscience towards that pole to be consciously realised, the attractive force of the ideal would be appreciably strengthened, and the morality of spiritual freedom would begin (one might hope) to establish itself at the expense of the existing morality of unbridled license. It is the want of a central aim in life which is demoralising us ; and if we are ever to have an effective central aim, we must try to determine what is the ultimate object of moral obligation, we must try to come to an understanding with ourselves as to the nature of ideal good.

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From the point of view of the Higher Pantheism this problem is easy of solution. If All is One, the All as One must needs be the magnetic pole to which conscience instinctively turns. The One Reality which presents itself to the noetic sense as Ideal Truth, to the æsthetic sense as Ideal Beauty, to the social sense as Ideal Order, presents itself to the moral sense as Ideal Good.

But is Ideal Good an attainable goal? Does it not lie beyond the utmost imaginable horizon of human thought? Is not the good of one's kind for all practical purposes the supreme end of moral action? So the humanist will argue. But a fallacy lurks in his protest. For how shall a man best discharge his duty to mankind? Who will point out to him the path which leads to this goal? Duty to the tribe was fully and accurately prescribed by custom. Duty to the larger communities into which tribes coalesced was prescribed, in ample if not in complete detail, by elaborate codes of Law. But where shall a man find the Law, whether customary or codified, which will tell him in any but the most general terms what is his duty to man as man? Is he, then, to think the matter out for himself? If he tries to do so he will probably find himself at variance with men who are quite as disinterested as he is; and, in the attempt to reconcile their divergent views, he and they will at last have to

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appeal to their respective conceptions of what is the ideal end of man's existence. In other words, they will have to ask themselves the very question which the humanist shirks. What is Ideal Good ?

The man who is most ready to live and die for his fellow-men would probably tell you, if he could interpret the subtle workings of his conscience, that what moved him to sacrifice himself to others was a sense of duty to something larger and remoter than anything which he consciously aimed at ; he would tell you that at the heart of his sense of duty to Humanity was his sense of duty to his own ideal self—and to God.

I admit indeed that man is essentially a social being ; and I am ready to infer from this admission that a sense of communal obligation will always and rightly dominate his life. How is this social sense to be reconciled with his sense of obligation to his own ideal self ? I have assumed that the latter sense is ultimate in the sphere of morality. Will the sense of communal obligation be its rival to the very end ? No, not its rival, but in the last resort its fellow-worker and its other self. For, in virtue of his ideal self, each of us is a member of a community which is all-embracing, the Cosmic Commonwealth, the All which is One. In and through his membership of that community his communal and his ideal self will merge into one, and

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the feud between them which has distracted him, ever since he first began to outgrow the stage of moral automatism by freeing himself from bondage to tribal collectivism, will cease to exist. Then he will have got to the heart of religion, and he will have found his real self by losing himself in love.

CHAPTER VII

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS DEVOTION

ONE thing is needed for the effective moralisation of conduct—an aim in life which is both central and supreme. To supply such an aim is the function of religion. For its own sake the sense of moral obligation must be ever tending to transform itself into religious devotion. This is an aspect of the relation between religion and morality which moralists have too often ignored. There is a counter aspect which religious devotees are apt to lose sight of. For its own sake religious devotion must always be ready to conform to the essential principles of morality, as defined and sanctioned by “the general heart of men.” The familiar saying “God’s ways are not as our ways,” is one of those half-truths which lend themselves, with fatal facility, to misinterpretation and abuse.

Lord Bryce, in his book on “South America,” tells the following story. “Valverde (a friar

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who afterwards became Bishop of Cuzco) accompanied Pizarro on his expedition and stood by the leader's side in the square at Caxamarca when he was welcoming as a friend the Inca Atahualpa. When Atahualpa declined the summons of Valverde to accept baptism and recognise Charles V as sovereign, Pizarro, whose men were fully armed, and had already been instructed to seize the unsuspecting Inca and massacre his followers, hesitated or affected for a moment to hesitate, and turned to Valverde for advice. 'I absolve you,' answered the friar. 'Fall on, Castilians, I absolve you.' With this the slaughter of the astonished crowd began : and thousands perished in the city square before night descended on the butchery."

There must have been something seriously amiss with the conception of God which could have countenanced a minister of religion in laying, as an offering, on the highest of all altars, a deed of treachery and cruelty which would have been accounted disgraceful in Red Indian warfare. The God whom Valverde worshipped was the God of Christendom. It was out of zeal for the honour and glory of that deity, it was in order to spread the knowledge and the worship of him in a strange land, that Valverde authorised Pizarro and his followers to break faith with the Inca and massacre the unarmed and innocent crowd which had come with him to Caxamarca.

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The God of Islam, who is first cousin to the God of Christendom, though possibly—owing to his Arab origin—less ready to condone acts of treachery, seems to take an equal delight in the bloodshed of his reputed enemies. Here is an extract from the Mahdist official literature: “The Ansor, not satisfied with their victory, pursued the retreating enemy till sunset, and after that the cavalry still continued pursuing till almost all were killed. They followed them even as far as the caves and forests, where they tried to conceal themselves, but they were all killed even to the very last. Allah was with us, and we saw several miracles during the battle. Allah sent down fire, which burned up the dead bodies of the enemy and even their wounded, showing how violent was his wrath against them.” This passage has a strong Old Testament flavour, and it also reminds one of some of the wartime utterances of the German Emperor and the Lutheran pastors. Its sincerity is undeniable; and it would be easy to find parallels to it by the thousand in the literature of Christendom and Islam.

There is one thing which Allah and the Christian God have in common. They are both supernatural deities. They were both called into being, and are both still kept alive, by the belief that the All is *not* One. The source of this belief is the conviction of the average man, as a conscious

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being, that the outward and visible world is the whole of *Nature*, a conviction which has had to be corrected, in response to the demands of the average man's subconscious self, by the creation, so to speak, of a supernatural world. Between these two worlds yawns a great gulf, unfathomable and—in the order of nature—impassable, into which, if I may again repeat myself, drains unceasingly the reality of the lower world and the actuality of the higher. The Supernatural world is the abode of God, who, being presumably all-powerful, can, if he pleases, reveal himself and declare his will to man. If this revelation were universal and impartial, it would be a natural process; and in that case the gulf between the two worlds would automatically disappear. The worshippers of a supernatural deity have therefore always assumed that when God wishes to reveal himself to man, he must needs use special instruments for the purpose—a special prophet, a special people, a special church. And each of the rival religions has persuaded itself that the special revelation was made to it and to it only, that its tutelary deity is the God who rules the Universe, and that all other tutelary deities are “false gods.”

Let us go back to the Gods of Christendom and Islam, the deity to whom Valverde offered hecatombs of murdered Peruvians, and the deity who exalted in the slaughter of the Mahdi's

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enemies, and even lent a helping hand by burning the wounded alive. These deities have no doubt their estimable qualities, but the bare fact that they delight in bloodshed, and are ready to condone cruelty and treachery if these are dedicated to their service, disposes of their claim to be the ultimate objects of religious devotion. They owe their defects and limitation to their Jewish origin. The Jews were the first people to grasp and apply the essential principle of supernaturalism. What differentiated theirs from all other religions was that its deity was at once strictly national and absolutely universal, as absolutely universal (if there are degrees in absoluteness) as it is possible for a national deity to be. The two conceptions are, of course, incompatible with one another, but they managed to co-exist in the Jewish mind. When the Jews placed their own deity on the throne of the Universe, they had no misgiving as to the soundness of their theology but, on the contrary, an intensity of conviction which infected other peoples so that at last half the human race adopted their deity as its own. In contemplating this extraordinary achievement one is divided between two conflicting sentiments—admiration of the super-patriotism of the Jews and condemnation of their super-egoism, admiration of their tenacity of purpose, and condemnation of their inability to look at things from any standpoint but their own.

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The Jewish conception of God, the conception of a super-natural deity who makes favourites and takes sides, has been on trial for more than two thousand years ; and the fruits which it has borne are such that even in Christendom, where it has been profoundly modified, to its own advantage, by the example and teaching and personal influence of Christ, we are at last beginning to realise that its defects outweigh its merits.

The cult of a God who takes sides, a God who is at once the Lord of the Universe and a partisan in human affairs, has done more than any other influence to intensify and perpetuate the natural selfishness of man's heart, and therefore, since selfishness is the beginning and end of immorality, to demoralise man's life. In this respect it stands apart from all other demoralising influences, the difference between it and them being one, not of degree, but of kind.

Let us consider what the cult of such a deity has done for Christendom. The Christian believer is taught from his earliest days that God is on his side, that he has been born into the only true religion, that the church to which he belongs enjoys a monopoly of God's grace and favour, that the truth of things has been revealed to it, and to it alone, that the means of salvation are at its exclusive disposal, that the keys of heaven are in its keeping. He has been taught, in other

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words, that the God of the Universe is in a special sense his God, that he has proprietary rights, so to speak, in God, which are denied to a large majority of his fellow men. Can we wonder that, as he grows up, the desire to exploit God for purposes of his own should begin to take possession of his heart? He has been taught to pray to God for grace, for salvation, for his daily bread, for the satisfaction of his daily needs. From needs to wishes the transition is easy. He will, without any misgiving, pray to God for secular blessings, for material prosperity, for success in financial and other such enterprises, for boons of various kinds, some of which cannot be granted except at the expense of his neighbours. He will pray for rain when his neighbour needs dry weather; for an east wind when his neighbour (a fisherman, like himself, let us say) needs a west wind; and so on. At last he will carry his exploitation of God so far as to pray for success in nefarious enterprises, for the triumph of dishonest schemes, for the gratification of unholy desires, for vengeance on his personal enemies. He has even been known, if he happened to be a war-profiteer, to pray for the continuance of war when all the world was sighing for peace.

Nor does he cease to be self-centred when he looks beyond the grave. He has been taught to obey and serve God—and the deputies of God—

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from interested motives. He has been promised, if he was obedient, an eternity of happiness in a quasi-material Heaven. He has been threatened, if he was disobedient, with an eternity of torment in a quasi-material Hell. He has been taught to think, first and foremost, of his own individual salvation, to look forward with rapture to the joys of a Heaven from which the greater part of his fellow men would be excluded, to contemplate with perfect equanimity the never-ending sufferings of the damned in a capacious and thickly populated Hell.

He has been taught to be intolerant. His God is the only true God. His religion is the only true religion. The rest of the world is plunged in darkness. The heathen, the infidel, the heretic are outcasts from the Divine Presence, enemies—potential or actual—of God. And God's enemies are his enemies. Hence the sanguinary religious wars, hence the cruel religious persecutions, which have darkened the pages of history in Christendom and Islam. Hence the internal dissensions which have done so much to hinder the advance of Christianity as a missionary religion, the bitter quarrels between church and church, between sect and sect. Hence, too—for there is a constant overflow of intolerance from spiritual reservoirs into the channels of political, social and economic life—hence comes no small proportion of the envies and jealousies, the

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rancours and hatreds, the quarrels and struggles, which, though they might be thought to have exhausted themselves in the stupendous catastrophe of the late war, have never been more virulent than they are to-day.

And the lesson of intolerance is not one which the believer has been left to learn for himself. He has been officially warned against tolerance, against the openness of mind which has openness of heart, and therefore sympathy and understanding, as its other self. God's enemies are his enemies. When he has committed this proposition to memory, and laid it to heart, he will be ready to "convert" it, ready to persuade himself that his enemies are God's enemies. And when he has persuaded himself of this, he will be ready to take his evil passions and solemnly dedicate them to the service of God.

When the Catholic Church was at the heyday of its power, it dreamed—or some of the devouter spirits in it dreamed—of bringing about a state of universal peace by establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. The fate that befell this pious dream is instructive. "The mediæval Papacy," says Professor Hearnshaw, "failed to establish the Kingdom of God on earth mainly through faults of its own. It became involved in conflicts from temporal dominion in the course of which it prostituted all its spiritual powers to secular ends, it became greedy of land and wealth,

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and showed itself ready to barter divine prerogatives for lucre; it passed into the hands of unworthy men who used it to aggrandise their own families or even to minister to their own lusts; it grew to be obscurantist, intolerant, persecuting; it became torn by suicidal schism and rent by scandalous civil war; it sank into the mire of Italian politics, lost its cosmopolitan character, and was degraded into a bandit principality. Never was there a greater catastrophe since Lucifer fell from heaven.”* But the catastrophe was inevitable. Nothing is more certain to overstrain, and therefore to corrupt human nature than the belief that one has a monopoly of the grace and favour of God.

The very manner in which the “truths of religion” were presented to the believer in his childhood has been an evil influence in his life. The “definite dogmatic teaching” on which religious orthodoxy prides itself, and by which alone the mysteries of “revealed religion” can be presented to the young, if it has not been the fountain-head of all that is harsh, repressive, deadening, growth-arresting in education, has at least been one of the chief sources from which those bitter waters flow. And here again we see how supernaturalism tends to foster selfishness,

* “*Mediæval Conceptions of the Kingdom of God*,” by Prof. F. J. C. Hearnshaw. Hibbert Journal, April 1921.

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with all that selfishness implies. For there is nothing so demoralising as arrested growth, which shuts its victim up in his own narrow, petty, undeveloped, self-centred self.

There is another demoralising influence in supernaturalism, which I must not pass over, the influence of the doctrine of Forgiveness of Sins and (in Catholic countries) of the Confessional. The sinner who confesses his sins and receives priestly absolution seriously believes (if he is a sincere Catholic) that his sins have been forgiven him, that the recording slate has been wiped clean. Is not this an encouragement to him to run up a fresh score? The Castilians who massacred the unarmed Peruvians at Caxamarca, did so, one may safely conjecture, with a light heart, believing that Valverde was the magician which he professed to be, that he had the power of cleansing souls from the guilt of treachery and murder.

The evils which I have enumerated are all inherent in supernaturalism. The Supernatural God is bound to take sides. He has no choice in the matter. The obligation to protect the interests and espouse the quarrels of his followers in an inheritance from his tribal days. But I need not take pains to prove that he is unworthy of our devotion. For in truth he is on his death-bed. The hearts and the minds of men are turning away from him. What Lord Bryce says

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of South America is true of most Christian countries, especially of those in which Catholicism has reigned without a rival: "Men of the upper or educated class appear wholly indifferent to theology and to Christian worship. It has no interest for them. The absence of a religious foundation for thought and conduct is a grave misfortune for Latin America." The system, in which our faith in a supernatural God embodied itself when it was yet vigorous, survives, but the soul of it is dead. Or if there is a soul in it, it is not its own. Devotion to Christ, to the person of Christ and to the Christ ideal, has always been the good genius of Christianity; and it is for the sake of Christ that we have given to his reputed Father—the jealous, vindictive, partisan God of the Old Testament—a loyalty to which he had no claim. But we are now beginning to realise that there is no necessary connexion between supernatural religion and the Christ ideal; and some of us go so far as to believe that until supernaturalism, the evil genius of Christianity, has been finally exorcised, the Christ ideal will not come into its own.

When that day comes, will religion have ceased to be? Is atheism our only alternative for supernaturalism? For the moment revolt against the supernatural, with all its attendant evils, seems to be throwing us into the arms of an atheistic materialism which is at once the

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negation of all religion and the most rigidly dogmatic of creeds. Will this permanently content us? The present state of the world is a sufficient answer to this question. We are passing through a phase of widespread demoralisation, in which selfishness, whether individual or collective, seems to be the chief motive to action. What is demoralising us is the want of a central aim in life, an aim which will appeal, potentially if not actually, to all men, an aim which will have the right, if not the might, to rule our hearts. Selfishness provides us with a thousand conflicting aims. Religion alone can subdue selfishness by providing us with one.

What then is the remedy for our troubles? Religion we must have. What form will the religion for which we are waiting take? The worship of a God who takes sides has been our undoing. Must we not now give our devotion to a God who does not and cannot take sides? There is only one such deity—the One who is All. There will always be a strain of selfishness in the devotion which is given to any lesser deity than this. But there can be no strain of selfishness in the devotion which is given to the All in the very act of being given to the One.

I will now try to explain what I meant when I said that the Christ ideal was the good genius of Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF SELF

THE mystery of self is impenetrable by thought. We can think and talk and write all round it, but we cannot get to the heart of it. We can approach the mystery from many quarters of thought. We can think of self as gradually emerging out of the depths of the Unconscious. We can think of it as slumbering in the mineral, as dreaming in the plant, as awaking in the animal to consciousness of sensation, as awaking in man to consciousness of itself. We can think of the wonderful transformation which consciousness of self has wrought and is ever working—the transformation of “instinct into reason, blind purpose into self-determining will, feeling into fellow-feeling, perception into imagination, sensuous enjoyment into the quest of ideal beauty, carnal desire into spiritual love, communal devotion into the ‘enthusiasm of humanity,’

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the instinct of self-preservation into the thirst for 'eternal life'." We can think of the gradual outgrowth of the individual self, and then of its gradual transcendence by the outgrowth of the universal self. We can think of the expansion of self as accompanying the expansion of man's social life. We can think of it as the reward of a life of self-sacrifice. We can think of the sudden illumination of consciousness, and the consequent revelation of the infinitude of self, which is said to result from systematic self-discipline and concentration of thought. And so on. And all the while we can ask ourselves : What is self ? and know in our heart of hearts that there is no answer to our question.

There is, however, one question which we can ask ourselves and, for our own sakes, ought to ask ourselves : What is man's true self ? But underlying this question is the assumption that man has many selves. What warrant is there for this assumption ? Where the cult of the Supernatural God prevails, the average man is content to assume, or at least to base his life on the assumption, that he has one self and only one. Let us study the problem from his point of view. Popular thought has always inclined towards a static and dualistic view of things, and popular religion has always reflected and still reflects this bias. The self or soul is supposed to have been created by the Supernatural God

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and united to the growing body of the infant in the pre-natal stage of its existence : the idea of its being the product of a long course of development carried on through a series of lives is entirely foreign to the theology of the West and the Near East. Having entered the world in this manner, the individual is placed on probation, just as Adam and Eve were when in the Garden of Eden. Two courses of life are open to him—obedience or disobedience to the revealed will of God. One or other of two destinies awaits him at death—salvation or perdition. Obedience to God's will is righteousness. Disobedience to God's will is wickedness. The probationer is to do right, not because righteousness will in the natural course of things reward itself, being indeed its own reward ; not because self-realisation, the finding of the true self, is the necessary result of self-development ; but because obedience to God's will is to be rewarded after death by an eternity of happiness in Heaven. How small a part the idea of soul-growth, of the natural development of the self, plays in this scheme of life, is proved by the prominent place which the doctrine of Forgiveness of Sins has always held in the popular—and the official—theology of Christendom. According to this doctrine it is possible for a life of abandoned wickedness to be atoned for by a death-bed repentance, followed in due course by confession

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to and absolution by a priest*. In such a case there would no doubt have to be a sojourn of some duration in Purgatory ; but when that was over the wickedness of the life on earth would have been wiped out, made as though it had never been, and the sinner would be fit to take his place among the elect. If he happened to be a Protestant he might even hope, by pleading the merits and the precious blood of the Redeemer, to be admitted into Heaven at the moment of his death.

The destiny of the soul is in any case unalterably fixed at the moment of death. Neither development nor deterioration is henceforth possible. The "saved" soul enters, either at once or (according to Catholic belief) after passing through the ante-room of Purgatory, into the unalloyed happiness of Heaven. The "lost" soul enters at once into the unalloyed misery of Hell. In other words, each of them enters into a *state* and will remain in that state for ever. Growth in grace on the part of the "saved" is not contemplated. Nor is repentance, with a

* Absolution would be refused to the repentant sinner unless he tried to make reparation for the evil that he had wrought. But how could he repair the wrongs that he had done to others in the course of a misspent life ? And how could he repair the ruin of his own character which the reaction of his conduct on it had gradually brought about ? And how much reality would there be in a repentance the chief motive to which was fear ?

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turning towards a new life, on the part of the "lost." The state of probation is over, and the resultant states are eternal.

What form does the concept of self take in this static philosophy? The idea of self-development is conspicuous by its absence. The self is thought of as a reservoir, a self-contained receptacle for "grace" or for "wrath," not as a river. The former conception is entirely in keeping with the fundamental assumptions of supernaturalism. That it is entirely out of keeping with the general trend of modern thought is a further proof that supernaturalism has had its day. The dynamic conception of self is now in the ascendant. The flowing tide of thought—physiological, psychological, neo-psychological, critical, metaphysical—is with it. Man is beginning to realise that his self is a process, not a result—a process between two opposite poles, the inter-action of which gives us the "actual self" of our everyday experience. For all practical purposes it will suffice if we think of these as the poles of individuality and universality; but we must remind ourselves, when we use these words, that the achievement of individuality, involving as it does the out-growth of self-consciousness, really belongs to a comparatively late stage in the development of self.

Regarded as a process, self may be likened to

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a river which has its ultimate origin in the infinite sea, and does not begin its individual existence until the exhalations from the sea have condensed into moisture, fallen to earth as rain, and then formed a channel for themselves on their return journey to their source. The river widens as it goes; the land on either side of it recedes continuously; the tidal wave from the sea ascends its channel; and at last, when its shores have wholly faded from sight, the river may be said to have widened out into the sea. Has it lost itself then, or has it found itself? When does a river become a river? When does it cease to be a river? These questions are unanswerable when asked with regard to the rivers that drain the surface of our earth. They are doubly unanswerable when asked with regard to the river of self.

Man is beginning to realise that his self is a process. In other words, he is beginning to realise that he has an infinity of selves. The latter expression, though perhaps less accurate than the former, is more convenient; and I need not hesitate to use it. The polar selves of man's being are the individual self and the universal self. Until individuality has been achieved, the life of man, *as man*, has not begun. When individuality has been achieved, man has begun to find himself; blindly, instinctively, without knowing what he is aiming at, he has started

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on the quest which is to occupy him for the rest of time, the quest of the true, the real, the universal, the ideal self. It is not until he has found this self, it is not until he has lost himself in oneness with the All, that he will be free to say, I am I.

This much we can see at the outset when once we have convinced ourselves that self is indeed a river, not a tank. But how is man, the individual man, to fulfil this high destiny? The loss of self in oneness with the All must be an actual experience, not a mere conclusion of speculative thought. It must take the form of an expansion and illumination of consciousness which immeasurably transcends the horizon of man's normal life, and which words are therefore powerless to describe. Each man in turn must realise the experience for himself. Until he has done so he cannot begin to understand what it is. How is he to fit himself for this vision of the All? If he does not fit himself for it he will not be able to enjoy it. It will not come to him in a dream or a trance. Or if it does, he must first have prepared himself for it. He must have earned it so fully that he can claim it at last, not as a favour but as a right.

There seem to be various methods by which this can be done. In India, where there is a spiritual tradition which we of the West have lost (if it was ever ours), there are two direct but

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difficult paths to the universalisation of consciousness. The first is the path of the Gnani, the path of concentrated thought. The second is the path of the Bhakti, the path of concentrated desire. In the Far East men are capable of an intensity of concentration, both of thought and of desire, which is almost entirely unknown in the West. Intense concentration of thought on one object involves exclusion of all other thoughts from the mind, and ends at last in the cessation of all thought: for when thought is concentrated exclusively on one object for any length of time it ceases to be thought; comparison, discrimination, perception of similarity, of difference, of identity, of contrast—these, and other mental processes which enter into the composition of thought come to an end; the thinker passes into a trance-like state in which thought is wholly suspended; “he stands for a moment in oblivion; then *that* veil lifts, and there streams through his being a vast and illumined consciousness, glorious, that fills and overflows him, ‘surrounding him like a pot in water, which has the liquid within it and without.’ In this consciousness there is divine knowledge but no thought. It is Samadhi, the universal ‘I am’.”*

Concentration of desire on God leads to the

* “From Adams Peak to Elephanta,” by Edward Carpenter.

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same goal ; for it involves the exclusion of all other desire, and ends in the transfiguration of the one desire into an ecstasy of disinterested love, in which the devotee realises to the full his oneness with the Real, the Supreme, the all-embracing One.

But these experiences and these methods of self-realisation are not for the West. Even in India the "adept," though he is believed in and held in high favour, is the rare exception. For the mass of the people a ceremonial religion seems to suffice. In the West the adept is virtually unknown. For thousands of years our traditions and our experiences in these matters have diverged widely from those of the Far East, and there is now a corresponding divergence between the temperaments of the two races. I belong to the West, and my book is an appeal to Western readers. I must therefore ask myself : How are we of the West to attain to that infinite expansion and illumination of consciousness which is the goal of self-development, whether in the West or in the East ?

Christ has solved this problem for us. When I speak of Christ I am thinking of the Christ ideal rather than the historic Christ : what the historic Christ believed and taught is in dispute ; and if we are to wait till scholars and other experts have made up their minds on this point, we may have to wait for ever. What the Christ

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ideal has done for us, and is capable of doing for us, is not in dispute. For the Christ ideal is the ideal of self-transcendence through self-sacrifice, with one's eyes fixed on God ; self-sacrifice in one's dealings with one's fellow men. It was by consecrating and transfiguring the humdrum, prosaic, every day life of moral conduct and social service, that Christ opened up to us a path to the realisation of God-consciousness, of oneness with the All—a long, tedious, difficult path, but a path which all men may walk in, and which, if faithfully followed, will lead us at last to our goal.

In formulating the Two Great Commandments, and in appealing to us to find self by losing self, Christ went to the root of the whole matter. Speaking as a Jew to Jews, he used the notation of the Jewish religion ; but we are not to suppose that he was bound by the limitations of that religion, by its inadequate conception of God, by its rigidly national outlook on life. When Christ said : “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength,” are we to suppose that he was thinking of the half-tribal, half-cosmic God of the Old Testament, the God who ruled over the universe, and yet, in his dealings with the dwellers on this planet, condescended to make favourites and take sides ? Surely not. Had such a deity been in

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his mind when he formulated the First Commandment, the Second—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—would have meant no more than "Thou shalt love thy brother Jew as thyself." This is not the meaning which Christendom, with its eyes on the Christ ideal, has read into those words. It has meant by "thy neighbour" thy brother, thy fellow-man. That it has not lived up to this interpretation of the words proves nothing more than that it has not lived up to the Christ ideal. That the Christ ideal demands that interpretation is certain. And it is equally certain that the God, love of whom binds one to love one's fellow-man—without distinction of race, or nationality, or caste, or class—as one loves oneself, is not a God who takes sides.

There are few men who do not know what it means to identify self with a community, to feel a sense of proprietorship in it, to be proud of its achievements as if they were one's own, to take shame to oneself for its failures, to sorrow when it sorrows, to rejoice when it rejoices. The community may be a gang of robbers or a syndicate of swindlers; yet, even so, devotion to it will count for something; for in his readiness to obey its rules, to work for it, to sacrifice himself for it, the individual will to some slight extent have learned to transcend his individual self. There was a time, as we have seen, when

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the communal self dominated the individual self so completely that the very consciousness of the individual became tribal. That stage in man's development passed away ; and it was well that it did so. For the community itself was separatist and self-centred ; and therefore the more successful it was in attracting devotion, the more it tended to arrest the moral and spiritual growth of its members by making them partners with it in its inhumanity and selfishness. The transcendence of self on the part of the individual, the identification of self with something beyond self, was complete as far as it went ; but it did not go far enough, and its completeness was therefore the proof and the measure of its failure. The community claimed the whole of what is potentially infinite, man's capacity for self-sacrifice ; and in making this claim upon it, it directed it towards a finite end. This was the capital offence of tribalism ; and it was because of this that it perished.

Now that it has passed away, having fulfilled its destiny by teaching us to lose and find self in social service, there is no one organised community which can claim the whole of a man's devotion ; and a vista into the infinite has therefore been opened up to man's spirit of self-sacrifice. There is no organised community which does so much for a man, or means so much to him, or has so just a title to his devotion, as

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his country. Yet even the service of one's country is not, as Germany has learnt to her cost, an end in itself. The lawful claims of Humanity, if one can but determine what these are, must, in the event of a conflict, take precedence of the claims of one's country. And beyond the Human Commonwealth, the as yet unorganised City of Man, beyond this and embracing it and finding an appropriate place for it in its own infinite life, is the Cosmic Commonwealth, the City of God. The pan-human self is higher than the patriotic self. The pan-cosmic self is the highest of all. Whatever may be the community to which we give loyalty and service, and with which we identify self, we must realise that it has its meaning and its purpose by reference to a community which is wider than itself: and that the same law holds good of the wider community; and so on, till we come at last to the community which at once transcends and includes all the rest. Self-sacrifice, with one's eyes on the ideal end of all self-sacrifice, this is the way of salvation for the mass of mankind; and this is the way which the Christ ideal calls upon us to enter. Each of us is to love his neighbour, his fellow man, as himself; but he is to give to the Infinite an infinity of love; he is to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength.

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When he is able to do this, when he is able to lose himself in devotion to the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all, when the sense of separateness from other things has died out of his heart, when the sense of oneness with all other things has taken complete possession of him, he will at last have universalised his consciousness and found his real self. And then, but not till then, he will have penetrated the mystery of self.

CHAPTER IX

THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF LOVE

IF All is indeed One, the question arises : What is it that draws all things together and makes them one ? The answer to this question is *Love*. The prominent part which the passion of personal love plays in the drama of human life is apt to blind us to the wider activities and the deeper significance of love. But in truth love is the master principle of the universe—the supreme organising or unifying principle, and the supreme creative or generative principle. Through love the Many come together in a spirit of mutual attraction and mutual service and build up the One, the indivisible whole. And through love the torch of life is handed on from age to age, burning in each successive age with a brighter and a fuller flame. And the two processes, the process of unification and the process of creation, are really one. The organisation of the Many into the One is itself

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a creative process, an advance in the development of life. And the greater the complexity, and the more perfect the controlling unity, the higher is the level of life. But where there is unity in complexity or, in a word, organisation, there is a spirit of co-operation among the various parts of the organic whole which seems, even on the lower levels of life, to be a foreglow of the dawning light of love.

The thesis of this book is that there are seven great quests on which the spirit of man has embarked, and that the ultimate object of each of these is the living Whole, the All which is One. The first of these quests is the quest of Ideal Truth. The second is the quest of Ideal Beauty. The third is the quest of Ideal Order. The fourth is the quest of Ideal Good. The fifth is the quest of Ideal Reality (God). The sixth is the quest of the Ideal Self. The seventh is the love of Love. I will now try to show that love is in some sort the decisive factor in each of the first six quests, and is therefore the main-spring of the whole movement of the soul towards its ideal.

In each of the quests the motive which sways the seeker is desire, and love is the apotheosis of desire. If the quest is to go on for ever, the flame of desire must burn for ever; but desire for the unattainable can sustain itself only by transforming itself into love. For love, if and

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so far as it is disinterested, does not ask for attainment or possession but finds its reward in itself :

“ Give [it] the wages of going on and not to die.”

This much we can see at the outset. Let us now consider each of the quests from the point of view of love.

If the quest of *ideal truth* is not to abort at the outset, the seeker must care more for truth than for himself. In other words, he must have an open mind. If openness of mind is to maintain itself for more than a passing season it must have as its counterpart openness of heart ; and the name for this is tolerance. Tolerance must not be confounded with indifference. Like its opposite, intolerance, it is an active principle ; and just as intolerance tends to transform itself into antipathy and hatred, so does tolerance tend to transform itself into sympathy and love. One knows from experience that temperamental bias plays an all-important part in the quest of ideal truth ; and the man whose bias is towards tolerance in matters of opinion, and sympathy with opinions which differ from his own, will have a different philosophy from the man who is intolerant and unsympathetic, who is in bondage to his own prejudices, whose eyes are blinded by self-love. A different philosophy, and surely a truer philosophy. The intolerant thinker is heading straight for

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dogmatism, positive or negative, the rock on which so many quests have foundered. The tolerant thinker is heading for the open sea.

The seeker for ideal truth desires to know. Knowledge, as the word is ordinarily used, implies the distinction between subject and object. Does this distinction hold good when the object of knowledge is ideal truth? Is the distinction final and absolute, or is it merely provisional. If it were final and absolute, the stream of speculative thought would lose itself at last in the quicksands of dualism. If it is merely provisional, when and how will it be transcended?

Let us take the case of two intimate friends, A and B. What does A know of B? He knows many things *about* him. What does he know *of* him? What knowledge has he of his thoughts, his feelings, his impulses, his motives, the secret workings of his heart, the subconscious springs of his life? The deeper and truer his love of his friend, the more sure and subtle will be his knowledge of these matters. The most mysterious and complex thing in nature is the human heart; and it is love alone which enables one, in this case and in that, to decipher its mysteries and unravel its complexities. The lover seems to be able to anticipate the wishes and divine the very thoughts of the beloved; and he owes his knowledge of human nature,

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not to psychological study, but to the piercing vision and subtle sympathy of love. And if it is love, not thought, not force of intellect or mental effort, which gives us knowledge—the only knowledge that really counts—of the heart and soul of a friend, may not one conjecture that it is love, not thought, which will give us knowledge—“saving” knowledge—of the universe. In and through love the lover goes out of himself into, and in some sort becomes one with, the object of his love, whatever that object may be. In other words, in and through love the distinction between subject and object is effaced for a while, and knowledge, in the conventional sense of the word, is superseded by a more intimate relation with what is known. May not one dream, then, that through love the intercourse with ideal truth, which, as the object of speculative thought, is for ever unattainable, will at last be won?

What is true of the quest of ideal truth is even more obviously and directly true of the quest of *ideal beauty*. The æsthetic delight which beauty kindles is scarcely to be distinguished from love. When beauty is incarnate in man or woman, delight in it readily transforms itself into the passion of love. And what distinguishes the artist, and especially the creative artist, from the mere æsthete is that in the æsthetic delight of the former there is a larger proportion and

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perhaps also a higher quality of love. The delight of the artist is more disinterested ; there is less of self in it ; his absorption in his subject is more complete ; the pleasure which beauty gives him is ever tending to lose itself in love. The creative artist who has found a theme worthy of his brush in some industrial region in which the hand of man has marred the face of nature, has, we may be sure, been inspired by love—love of nature and love of man. For love alone, love which has faith as its other self, could have generated his instinctive conviction that there is harmony at the heart of the seeming discord between man and nature, and therefore beauty at the heart of what for most men is a sordid and unlovely scene—a conviction which did not allow him to rest until he had found a point of view from which he could see the less attractive details of the picture co-operating with earth and sky and mist and cloud, and perhaps also with sea and river, to build up a beautiful whole.

And the love which the artist feels projects itself, one might almost say, into the things which he sees. For the chief constituent element in beauty is harmony, whether in being or in becoming ; and wherever there is harmony something akin to love, some rudimentary form or faint foreshadowing of love, is at work—the love which makes co-operation possible, the love

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which the various parts may be imagined to feel for one another, and for the whole. Therefore it is no paradox to say that delight in beauty, if it is not actually resolvable into, has at least something in common with, the love of love.

That love is the only foundation on which the *Ideal Commonwealth* can be built is a self-evident truth. As a rule men have been drawn together into social communities either by self-interest or by force. The history of mankind proves conclusively that neither of these foundations can endure for long. When self-interest is the basis of social life, the germs of dry-rot, the dry-rot of greed and jealousy and internal strife, are in the structure from the very beginning. When force is the basis, the instinctive demand of the conquered peoples for freedom for self-development, their instinctive protest against being ruled without their consent and against the grain of their nature, is a disruptive influence which will never cease to work. A few years ago the mighty Russian Empire seemed to be a stable and orderly community; to-day it is a ruinous heap. When self-interest and force are our chief centripetal agencies, there are sure to be frequent quarrels between people and people, and frequent appeals to the *ultima ratio* of war. As science has made war horrible and terrible beyond words, and as it bids fair to make war impossible, except at the cost of the suicide of the human

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race, it behoves us to look beyond self-interest and force for the unifying principle of our social and political life. The ultimate evolution of an all-embracing Super-state is our only hope of social salvation; and if such a state is to be built up, its foundations must be laid in the goodwill and mutual helpfulness of the various peoples of the world, each of which will have laid the foundations of its own State in the goodwill and mutual helpfulness of its citizens. Free co-operation for a common end is what we must look forward to both in the State and the Super-state; and the way of free co-operation is the way of brotherly love.

That love is the fulfilling of the *moral law* is one of those familiar sayings, the simplicity of which covers a depth of meaning which is not easily fathomed. If selfishness is the beginning and end of immorality, unselfishness must be the beginning and end of moral goodness. The essence of unselfishness is the passing out of self, on the one hand into the lives of others, on the other hand into a larger life of one's own. These two processes are really one, but it is well that we should sometimes think of them as two. Through the former process a man does his duty to his neighbour. Through the latter, his duty to himself. Through the former a man helps to build up the social life of his fellow men. Through the latter he helps to build up his own character,

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to "make" his own soul. The active principle in an unselfish life is self-sacrifice. In the earlier stages of self-sacrifice there is some admixture of pain. Something which is dear to one has to be surrendered—the nearer to the remoter good, the semblance to the reality of happiness ; and before this surrender can be made, opposition from within must be faced and, at whatever cost, overcome. Yet painfulness is not of the essence of sacrifice. On the contrary, the presence of pain proves that the sacrifice is incomplete, that there is something in it of reservation and regret. The struggle which self-sacrifice involves is meritorious, not so much because it is a struggle as because it helps to diminish the resistance and reluctance which have been experienced in itself, and so tends to make the path of duty as easy and pleasant as it once was difficult and distasteful. The ideal life is one in which all the desires of man's heart are permanently enlisted on the side of right ; and in such a life the sacrifice of the lower self would be attended with pain no longer, but with unalloyed delight.

But when self-sacrifice is attended with unalloyed delight it has ceased to be self-sacrifice ; it has transformed itself into love. In love the loss of self is complete ; but for this very reason there is joy in the losing, not pain. The lover, whatever may be the object of his love, will

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sacrifice himself for it freely and fully, and count his loss—not as a matter of calculation, but of vivid inward experience—as tenfold gain. Love, then, is the other self, and the higher self, of unselfishness. If the self-sacrifice is genuine, if it has not been made at the dictation of “authority,” or in response to the threat of punishment or the promise of reward, it must have been begun at the bidding of love. But the love which is present in the inception of self-sacrifice is love militant, whereas the love which crowns and completes self-sacrifice and ends by absorbing it into itself is love triumphant, the love which Mrs. Browning had in mind when she said that “more can never be than just love.” When we say that love is the fulfilling of the moral law we mean that it is the apotheosis of morality, the transfiguration of it into something beyond itself, something divine and glorious for which we can find no other name than—love; and we mean that it is the destiny of morality to be so transfigured, that this is the very *raison d’etre*, the very meaning and purpose of the moral struggle.

If *religious devotion* is not resolvable into love, it is unworthy of its object. The truth of this statement is or ought to be self-evident. I will return to it when I have said a few words as to the relation between love and *consciousness of self*.

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The self of which we are conscious at any given moment is not the real self ; for, to go no further, it is still in process of development, it is still emerging out of the darkness of the Unconscious, it is still very far from the perfection of which its nature admits. Till it attains to that perfection it will not have established its claim to be the man's real self, and the man himself will not be free to say " I am I." The way to the real self is the way of self-finding through self-losing, the way of dying to the lower, narrower and nearer self, and living to the higher, wider and remoter self. In the sphere of " conduct " self-loss takes the form of self-sacrifice ; but conduct, in the stricter sense of the word, is not the whole, or even the main part of man's life. A man may lose himself in interests of various kinds, in devotion to art, to letters, to science, to philosophy ; he may take up causes, throw himself into movements, work for reforms ; and in each of these activities he will find a way of escape from his apparent self, and a way of approach to his real self. But whatever he may take up he must give himself to it for its own sake, and not for the sake of any material or quasi-material advantage which it will bring to him. In other words, his devotion to it must be disinterested ; and another name for disinterested devotion is love. Love, then, is the supreme expansive force in man's complex nature, the secret of his growth in

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spiritual stature, the mainspring of the energies by which he enlarges the borders of his being and becomes at last what he was meant to be.

I have likened self to a river, widening and deepening as it flows along, and opening out at last into the infinite sea. It is love that draws the river into the embraces of the sea, there to lose its individual existence and to find its real self :

“ O sea to which all rivers glide at last,
I am not I till I am one with thee.
I am not I till, loosed from self's control,
I cease to be, and love absorbs my soul.”

I have tried to show that love immingles itself with all the higher activities of man's spirit, and that in the quest of each of the ideals which draw him from afar and make his life worth living, and which are all aspects of the one ideal, love is his guiding star. I have now to ask myself, what is the ultimate object of love ? The answer to this question is of course, God. But what do we mean by God ? What vision of God is before our eyes when we repeat the first of the two great Commandments ? Of the rival deities, the God of Nature and the Supernatural God, which is the worthier to receive the offering of pure, unselfish love, the love in which all thought of self is submerged by a flood of devotion, the

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love which, in its effort to rise to the level of its infinite object, dies as love, and lives again as adoration? For many centuries we of the West and the Near East, who have inherited the Jewish conception of God, have professed to give love, such love as I describe, to our Deity. Have we really done so? Has our love been pure gold? Has it been free from the two base-metal alloys of selfish desire and selfish fear? I am very sure that it has not. I doubt if even in theory it has been pure. Our own scriptures remind us that perfect love casteth out fear. And yet we are authoritatively taught that fear of God should be one of the chief motives in our lives.

Theologians may try to persuade us that, however much we may fear God, we must also love him with a whole-hearted love. But, unfortunately, love is a stream, the tap of which cannot be turned on or off at will. We love what we do love, not what we profess to love, or are directed to love, and we are so constituted that we cannot give love, freely, fully and permanently, to what is not intrinsically lovable. Now the God who is known in Jewry as Jehovah or Yahweh, in Islam as Allah, and in Christendom as God the Father, is not intrinsically lovable. His character, as depicted in the Old Testament, has many unattractive traits; and if, as we are solemnly assured, he has doomed the greater

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part of the human race to an eternity of suffering in hell, the unsophisticated heart and mind must needs think of him as cruel and unjust. Attempts have been made to reconcile the doctrine of eternal punishment with the doctrine of the infinite goodness of God. Here is one of them : “ In the fifth dungeon is a little child. The little child is in this red hot oven. See how it twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet against the floor. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in hell—despair, desperate and horrible ! *God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw that the child would get worse and worse, and would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in hell. So God (in his mercy) called it out of the world in its early childhood.*”* If this is a fair sample of the goodness and mercy of God, we can scarcely wonder that in the hearts of his worshippers fear is ever tending to cast out love. Fear, or something worse than fear. In presenting God to us as an arbitrary tyrant, stern, jealous and vindictive, and in calling upon us to fear him, supernatural religion has done its best to stultify its own efforts to present God to us as the object of adoring love ; for a tyrant is never an amiable person, and in fear there is always an

* From “ Penny Books for Children,” by Father Furness. The italics are mine.

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element of aversion and antipathy which is nearer of kin to hatred than to love.

Has the heart of the West and the Near East really given itself to its Deity ? The Jews, if we may judge from their scriptures, loved the Law more than the Lawgiver—and loved the Law chiefly for the sake of the blessings by which obedience to it was to be rewarded ; for the love which is born of gratitude is all too easily resolvable into “ a lively sense of favours to come.” The Christian lavishes love on the man-God, Jesus Christ, and, in Catholic countries, on the Virgin Mary. These are the real objects of his devotion ; and, so far as he can be said to love God the Father, he loves him for their sakes. The deification of a man has been the saving element in Christianity ; for it has opened up a channel for the outflow of unselfish love. In Islam the prevailing attitude is one of patient resignation, relieved from time to time by outbursts of fanatical zeal. For both in Islam and Christendom, especially in the former, the zealous believer has thought to prove his devotion to God by hating the reputed enemies of God, by putting the “ infidel ” to the sword, by sending the “ heretic ” to the stake. But the heart that harbours hatred tends to lose its power of loving ; and therefore the very zeal of the fanatic for his deity tends to lower the level and impair the quality of his love.

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The second base-metal element in our love of the super-natural God is selfish desire. We are to obey God's will because we love him. But we are also to obey it because God will reward obedience with the joys of Heaven, and punish disobedience with the pains of Hell. These two motives cannot co-exist for long. Sooner or later the debased currency will drive the sterling out of circulation. Sooner or later the canker of self-interest will eat the heart out of love. A Brother Lawrence, a genius in the art of loving, might be able to say with perfect sincerity, "Whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God." But in the first place, Brother Lawrence was one in a million or in many millions; and in the second place the fact that he was able to liberate his mind from the haunting fear of being damned, by concentrating his thought on love of God, suggests that he was in secret revolt against the doctrine of eternal perdition, that his acceptance of it was at best notional, not real. As a rule, the first concern of the devout believer is for his own salvation; and he carries individualism so far that he is prepared to find perfect happiness in a heaven from which the greater part of his fellow-men would be excluded. Such absorption in self is incompatible with love of God, for this, if for no other reason, that it is incompatible with love of man.

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How, then, are we to purify our love of God, to purify it from selfish desires and from selfish fears? I know of no way but that of transforming our conception of God. If our love of God is to be worthy of his acceptance, we must have nothing to hope for from him, and nothing to fear—nothing to hope for, because he gives us everything, nothing to fear because “in his will is our peace.” If in our love of God we are to get outside the range of self-interest, we must widen our conception of self until it becomes all-embracing; and the only way in which we can do this is by similarly widening our conception of God. If God is on the one hand the heart and soul of the universe, and on the other hand my own ideal self; if it is only in oneness with the heart and soul of the universe that I can find my ideal, and therefore my real, self; then, indeed, I can, and I must love God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength. I must love God because, if I love him, a fuller power of loving will be my reward, and because, if I do not love him, the loss of the power of loving will be my punishment. I must love God because he is love—the love which draws all things together into the oneness of cosmic life; because he is love, and because love is the only channel through which intercourse with love can be carried on. I must love the One for the sake of the All; and I must

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love the All for the sake of the One. Then the circle of love will be complete ; and there will be no place for the intrusion into it of love's arch-enemy, self.

But can one give love to an impersonal deity ? I will answer this question with another. Who will take upon himself to define the word personality ? Thought and love seems to be of its essence. But who can mark out the boundaries of either thought or love ? What is impersonal may fall short of personality, as the word is usually understood ; or it may transcend it. The God whom I worship, if impersonal at all, is impersonal in the latter sense of the word. His thoughts are not as our thoughts ; for he is the fountain-head of all thought. His love is not as our love ; for he is the fountain-head of all love. Therefore, if I am to bring God under the category of personality, I must believe that he so entirely transcends our conception and experience of personality as to be utterly unthinkable under that category. But I need not deal seriously with the theistic argument against pantheism. There was a time when it had more force than it has to-day. Now that we have begun to explore the mysterious depths of the Unconscious, the words *personal* and *impersonal* have gone into the melting pot ; and there is no saying what they will mean when they re-emerge from it. Meanwhile our choice seems to lie between investing

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the Most High with a quasi-human personality and thinking of him as super-personal. If we take the former course there will always be a danger of our love of God being tainted with selfishness, for the ideas of capriciousness, of favouritism, of partisanship, cling tenaciously to our conception of a humanly personal deity, and it is but natural that each of the worshippers of such a deity should seek to exploit in his own interest those traits in the divine character. But if God is super-personal—if, for example, he “knows not wrath nor pardon,” if he “is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he repent”—then it may be possible for us to love him for his own sake, and for love’s sake, and therefore to lose self in love of him, to lose self so completely that we shall never find it till we have found the reality of self in oneness with God.

In conclusion : Our love must be selfless if it is to be worthy of God’s acceptance. But if our love is to be selfless we must worship a God who is worthy of a selfless love. We must worship the Soul of the Universe, the One who is All, the Circle of Being whose centre is everywhere, but whose boundary line is nowhere. Then we shall begin to realise that in the life of the Whole, as in the life of each one of us, “*l’amour est tout ; fin, principe et moyen.*”

This conclusion takes me back to my starting-

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point. What of the vision of cosmic unity which I tried to describe in the opening pages of this book? That experience was limited and transient; and only the memory of it remains. But I knew then, and I know now, that the vision of the All has love of the All as its other self; and that the truer and clearer is the vision, the larger is the scope and the purer the flame of the love. Whether the vision generates the love, or the love generates the vision, I cannot say. What I can say is that in the last resort the vision and the love are one.





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